



4-6 JULY 2023 KILKENNY





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SECTION INTRODUCTION 2 OVERVIEW

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

By Kevin Callinan, President

In recording the activities and achievements of the past two years, a report like this should also provide the necessary focus for our conference debates so that we can take the work forward in a way that builds on the foundations that have been laid.

My focus as President has been on fostering collaboration between affiliate unions on the change agenda required to grow our movement and to make it more effective. I am pleased to say that the Executive Council has devoted more time to these aspects of organisational renewal and has sanctioned more capacity to address the necessary actions.

We were encouraged during the term of office by two pieces of research and the associated presentations. The first, *Union Voice in Ireland* by John Geary and Maria Belizon, suggested a very positive landscape for trade unions. This was confirmed a few months later by the work of *Ireland Thinks* which indicated a higher level of understanding of collective bargaining than might have been expected and a significant level of openness to union membership among non-members.



I had identified five areas that I was keen for the movement to pursue: A bigger State post pandemic; a brighter future for workers through improved conditions; improved levels of collective bargaining; a better presence for trade unions locally with strong roots in community; and, reaching out to sectors and workers who had been overlooked by unions in the past. My hope is that we have begun a journey on each of these themes and that we are proceeding on a progressive trajectory towards the realisation of a trade union movement that is more united and seen to be on the side of ordinary people.

The period under review in this report coincided with the return of inflation and we saw workers struggle to cope with the crisis in the cost-of-living. This has presented us with a challenge but it also constitutes an opportunity to demonstrate our relevance to workers as we seek to represent their interests. Whether this is in the context of a booming economy in the south or

Tory intransigence and inadequate budgets in the north, the call to action is clear. We must lead.

The battle to defend and improve living standards is the same although the conditions differ in the two jurisdictions. An absent government in the north for most of the two years under review has not served the interests of workers well. In the south the relatively poor 'social wage' means that the pay bargaining must bear the lion's share of the struggle.

In November 2022 we launched our 'Workers Demand Better' campaign to try to articulate the case despite the political void in Northern Ireland. The failure to establish a devolved government for more than a year after the May 2022 Assembly election is a source of disappointment. It has to be hoped that the outworking of the post-Brexit Windsor Framework will result in a return to relative stability and a renewed focus on the remaining elements of the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement in the period ahead.

The Labour Employer Economic Forum in the Republic has resulted in some positive developments not least the report of the High-Level Group on Collective Bargaining – although draft legislation along with that to transpose the related EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages remains to be seen. Nonetheless, it provides us with another important challenge and opportunity. Overall though, the LEEF has not been providing the depth of social dialogue or the pace of response to suggest that it can successfully tackle the larger social

issues of which housing is the most urgent and pressing.

We set out our vision in the early months of the pandemic in our No Going Back publication. The prebudget submissions For a Fairer Future (October 2021) and Raising Wages, Reducing Living Costs (September 2022) amplified these messages. And to coincide with May Day 2022 we published The Social Wage - Public Services and Income Supports in Ireland and the EU to draw attention to how far Ireland lags behind comparable European countries. So we have the arguments - the job ahead is to ensure that they become reality.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work and collegiality of all the Congress staff attached to the Dublin and Belfast offices. I had the pleasure of working with two General Secretaries – Patricia played a huge part in her eight years at the helm and we owe her a huge debt particularly for her interventions during the pandemic; Owen and Gerry are in the early stages of their roles and I have every confidence that they will guide us well. Starting with this conference!

Kevin Callinan

BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Owen Reidy, General Secretary

We come together as a movement in Kilkenny to review our work across the island since October 2021. More importantly we will debate and focus on the key priorities for workers in Ireland over the next 24 months. Our conference in Belfast in 2021 took place at a time of uncertainty as we were emerging from Covid 19, albeit tentatively. It is welcome that this conference is completely in-person. Trade unions are and will always be people centred organisations built on solidarity and relationships.



We must acknowledge the incredible commitment and endeavours of all our frontline 'essential' workers in both the public and private sectors who worked continuously and tirelessly during the pandemic. They kept us safe and our economy going. They are all heroes. Indeed, they are responsible for changing the narrative in society about the rights of workers, the right to collective bargaining and the support for better pay. We must build on that legacy.

As Europe emerged from the pandemic, we were to again witness war in our continent with the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a Congress we have attempted to display solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people with our demonstration at the Russian Embassy in Dublin and our leadership role in civic society in seeking to ensure that Ireland is and remains a welcoming place for members of our human race fleeing war, famine and other crises. We must continue to challenge the views of a small minority in our society who seek to exploit the state's failings in several areas to sow division, anti-migrant sentiment and pedal far-right views. We must demand that our society remains welcoming, open, tolerant and pluralist.

The last 12 months have been incredibly challenging for workers in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. The cost-of-living crisis with double digit inflation has hit workers and their families hard. We have had different experiences in both jurisdictions across the island. In the Republic of Ireland, we have demanded that the Irish government start to build the social wage to make our public services more accessible and affordable for citizens. We have seen a start in this with budget 2023, but it is only a start and it needs to be deeper and faster over the next number of years. Many of the initiatives have been temporary in nature and we need to ensure they become permanent. Our public services unions renegotiated the terms of *Building Momentum* to reflect the increases in the cost-of-living. This demonstrates the importance of organisation and indeed social dialogue. In the private sector our unions are bargaining for pay in both the workplace and where applicable across sectors.

In Northern Ireland on the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement the Executive has collapsed again, and after 13 years of Tory government misrule and austerity, our public services are on the brink of collapse. Since the autumn of 2022, right to the time of publication all our public service unions have been in a battle to secure decent pay increases and we support them and the members in the taking of this necessary and appropriate industrial action. Our unions through the NIC are fighting back with the *Workers Demand Better* campaign led ably by our new Assistant General Secretary, Gerry Murphy whom I warmly welcome to the staff of Congress.

The theme of this conference is **Making Work Pay – Unions transforming work and workplaces** because that is what our unions do and will continue to do.

Since we last met, Patricia King, our General Secretary for over seven years retired from her role late last year. Patricia has given a lifetime of leadership to the trade union movement in Ireland. She gained the immense respect of her peers and all of those she engaged with in the course of her work. Her leadership during the pandemic and her policy impact with the EWSS and the PUP in particular made a difference for thousands of workers. Perhaps her most significant achievement was the LEEF High Level Group Report on Collective Bargaining which combined with the recent EU Adequate Minimum Wages Directive has the potential to transform industrial relations in the interests of workers in a major way. It is up to all of us to make sure that this happens. I want to acknowledge Patricia's contribution to our movement and to thank her for her support and friendship in the course of my career to-date.

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

I wish to also acknowledge the leadership displayed by our outgoing President, Kevin Callinan. Kevin is incredibly ambitious for the trade union movement and has led the Trade Union Renewal initiative in the last 20 months. We must resolve at this conference to make the necessary changes over the next period to ensure that we are fit for purpose for the challenges that face workers in work and in society in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland so we can be a stronger and more impactful voice and force for all workers who call Ireland their home.

Despite the challenges we face, and they are significant, we have huge potential and opportunity for our movement, if we make the right choices and see those decisions through. We must maximise and make the most of the High-Level Group Report and the new EU Directive and insist the government legislate and transpose same in full.

From various research we know that post-pandemic public sentiment is with us, people support collective bargaining, younger workers who are currently not in unions want to unionise. Now is the time and opportunity to start to grow our movement again. As your new General Secretary, I relish this challenge and look forward to working with all of you in our collective leadership to seek to make this a reality.

Enjoy the conference.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS2021-2023



Kevin Callinan, President



Phil Ní Shéaghdha, Vice President



Justin McCamphill, Vice-President



Joe Cunningham, Treasurer



John Boyle, INTO



Richie Browne, Unite



Ethel Buckley, SIPTU



Kieran Christie, ASTI



John Clinton, POA



Séamus Dooley, NUJ



Carmel Gates, NIPSA



Michael Gillespie, TUI



Bernard Harbor, Fórsa





Frank Jones, IFUT



Gerry Light, Mandate



Katie Morgan, Fórsa



Séan McDonagh, CWU



Paddy Kavanagh, Connect



Erin Massey, CWU UK



Gerry Murphy, INTO



Patricia McKeown, UNISON



John King, SIPTU



Edward Matthews, INMO



Gerry McCormack, SIPTU



Brian Nolan, Connect



Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin, CWU



John O'Connell, FSU



Deirdre O'Connor, INTO



Jackie Pollock, Unite



Ciaran Rohan, AHCPS



Eoin Ronayne, Fórsa



Brian Smyth, NIPSA



Kieran Smyth, USDAW



Anne Speed, UNISON



Betty Tyrrell-Collard, DCTU, Local Reserved Panel



Ronan Sharkey, NASUWT (Youth Observer)



Jimmy Whelan, Unite (Retired Workers' Observer)

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THE ECONOMY*

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Island of Ireland's society and economy has been buffeted by a series of large shocks over the last three tumultuous years. Covid 19 and its associated lockdowns, the conflict in Europe, and the energy and cost-of-living crises are the most significant of these shocks. Brexit still casts a long shadow over both economies while various other shocks including supply chain pressures and changes; international shifts in globalisation and trade, and of course the ongoing adjustment necessitated by the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) also remain.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND SHOCKS

REPUBLIC OF TRELAND

The Republic of Ireland economy has generally proved resilient to these shocks. Irish real GDP grew at an extremely robust 12% in 2022 although GDP is admittedly a poor proxy for the health of the domestic Irish economy. This growth was mainly driven by the strong expansion of the multinational dominated sectors, with *industry* and *ICT* expanding by 23% and 11.4% respectively. But underlying domestic activity also grew strongly

in 2022. Modified domestic demand which covers personal, government, and domestic investment spending grew at a fast clip of 8.2%. Indeed, every economic sector grew in 2022, although activity in the construction sector and in the distribution, transport, hotels and restaurants sector remain below their respective 2019 prepandemic levels. Overall, Gross Value Added (GVA) in the multinational dominated sectors grew an enormous 79.8% between 2019 and 2022, while GVA growth in the domestic sectors was a much more modest 4.6%.

The underlying growth in 2022 reflects the continued unwinding of the Covid 19 related restrictions and the release of pent-up demand from households and businesses. Household savings increased dramatically during the pandemic as incomes were broadly protected and households had limited outlets to spend on certain services. The household savings rate jumped from 10% in 2019 to 34% in the second guarter of 2020 and was a still elevated 19% by the third quarter of 2022. The partial run-down of the savings rate in the post-pandemic period combined with strong jobs growth fuelled an increase in personal consumption of 4.6% in 2021 and 6.6% in 2022. Even so, and despite this bounce-back, real personal consumption in 2022 was still marginally (-0.6%) below its level in 2019 perhaps reflecting concerns about the economic outlook. Overall, retail sales (volume) increased by 3.1% between February 2020 and January 2023.

While the economy's output performance has been strong, the crisis in the housing sector shows no

^{*}The Report on the Economy was prepared in mid-April 2023

sign of abating and continues to be a drag on economic development and a source of intergenerational inequity. The volume of production in *building and construction* fell from 144.4 in 2019 to 130.3 in 2022. The housing crisis has been going on now in various guises for 25 years. A radical policy shift involving massive and direct state investment is required

in order to resolve the crises of under-supply and high cost. Finally, the Republic of Ireland's per capita GHG emissions remain amongst the highest in the EU. We can expect that the next 10 to 20 years will be characterised by significant transitions in a variety of economic sectors including energy, transport and agriculture.

Table 1 Modified domestic demand (MDD) growth in the Republic of Ireland, %

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019 – 22
MDD	2.4	-6.1	5.8	8.2	7.5
Consumption	2.7	-10.9	4.6	6.6	-0.6

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland's economy slowed considerably in 2022 in contrast to many other regional economies who experienced a significant and sustained upswing following the removal of pandemic related restrictions. Northern Ireland experienced a high point of growth in the second quarter of 2021 when the economy grew by 5.5%, but growth fell away steeply after that. The economy technically entered recession in the third quarter of 2022, after two consecutive quarters of negative growth were recorded. Growth was pulled down by a 5.3% contraction in output in the construction sector. Services, which account for over half of total output, fell by 0.5% in the third quarter of 2020.

Northern Ireland's economy appeared to perform better than its regional comparators in the UK during the pandemic, showing a much smaller fall in growth and a much larger swing back to growth in 2020. However, Northern Ireland had the lowest growth of any region in three of the four quarters of 2021 and performed only slightly ahead of Wales for much of 2022.

The poor performance of the economy post-pandemic comes on top of a very weak recovery in the years since the financial crisis. This impacts on other measures of economic performance including productivity, a key metric for the success of any economy. In 2000 Northern Ireland had a level of productivity that was equivalent to 84% of the UK average. By 2020, the latest year for which data are available, that rate had fallen to 83%, having never risen higher than 85% over the entire 20-year period. Given that the UK has one of the weakest productivity profiles of the major advanced economies, Northern Ireland's performance in this context is even weaker.

The figures call into question the economic model that Northern Ireland has been following to date

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

and in particular the absence of an active and coordinated industrial policy. While the challenges of improving the performance of the Northern Ireland economy are immense, there is also enormous potential in particular the investment that will be required to transition to a net zero carbon economy.

RESILIENT LABOUR MARKETS

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Republic of Ireland's labour market has thus far proven remarkably resilient to the wave of economic shocks. The initial response to Covid 19 via the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and the two Wage Subsidy Schemes protected incomes and employee's connection to their employer. Businesses were also given a range of extremely generous fiscal supports. In combination, these household and business supports preserved productive capacity and enabled the conditions for a broad-based labour market recovery in 2021 and 2022.

At 4.3% in January 2023, the unemployment rate was close to full employment and lower than the pre-pandemic unemployment rate. The Central Statistics Office's (CSO) employee index increased 10.1% between the end of 2019 and the 2022 thereby reaching a record level. This represented an increase of 206,000 employees between December 2019 and December 2022.

Total hours worked in the economy reached a new record of 80.6 million hours in the final quarter of 2022 with industry (11 million hours), health & social work (9.9 million hours) and wholesale/retail et al (9.5 million hours) the most active sectors. Actual hours worked had fallen as low as 71 million hours during the last quarter of 2020.

Youth unemployment has also fallen and the 9.1% rate in the final quarter of 2022 was the lowest fourth quarter reading since 2007. Youth unemployment was close to 30% in 2011. The long-term unemployment rate has also fallen, with the 1.3% rate in the final quarter of 2022 the lowest fourth quarter reading since 2006.

The number of people in employment was at a record 2.57 million in the fourth quarter of 2022. This was a net increase of 2.7% on the previous year. Overall, there were 2.69 million people in the labour force and 112,000 people unemployed. The male employment rate of 78% was well above the female employment rate of 68.5%. Even so, the female employment rate is on a long upward trend and having increased dramatically over the last decade. The rate stood at just 56.5% in 2012. The male employment rate has been recovering since the end of the 2008-12 crash but remains marginally below its 2006-07 levels.

Annual employment growth has averaged 3.1% over the last three years. The tightness of the labour market has shifted the composition of employment towards higher value added and better paid sectors. The

best performing sector in percentage terms, notwithstanding some high profile job losses in late 2022, was the information and communication sector, which added net 37,200 jobs (+29.2%). The health & social work sector added the most jobs (42,800). Both of these sectors are likely to grow strongly over the next decade given the trend towards digitalisation and ageing demographics. Employment also increased sharply in the professional, scientific and technical sector (+21%). This sector also has the highest job vacancy rate suggesting strong demand for workers.

employment terms. Total net job losses were greatest in the very low paid accommodation and food services sector (-8,600). This is actually a welcome development with many workers presumably availing of the option to shift to better paid and better quality employment. The sector also has the lowest job vacancy rate. The ongoing fiscal support for the sector is misguided from an industrial policy perspective. The other two sectors to decline were agriculture, forestry and fishing, which represents a continuation of a multi-decade trend, and administration and support.

However, three sectors declined in

Table 2 Employment by sector in the Republic of Ireland, 000's, Q4

	2019	2022	2019 – 22
			(% 3-year change)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	106.8	100.8	-5.6
Industry	286.3	323.0	12.8
Construction	147.1	163.2	10.9
Wholesale, retail, motor repair	309.3	320.3	3.6
Transportation & storage	108.0	113.1	4.7
Accommodation & food services	179.0	170.4	-4.8
Information & communication	127.4	164.6	29.2
Financial, insurance & real estate	115.1	132.7	15.3
Professional, scientific, technical	141.1	170.7	21.0
Administration & support	111.8	110.0	-1.6
Public administration & defence	116.8	137.5	17.7
Education	190.5	204.9	7.6
Human health & social work	293.7	336.5	14.6
Other & unknown	124.5	126.9	1.9
Total	2,357.3	2,574.5	9.2



NORTHERN IRELAND

In contrast to the very weak profile of economic growth, Northern Ireland's labour market has held up well in both the post-Covid recovery phase and throughout the cost-of-living crisis. Both employment and unemployment have performed comparatively well. However, economic activity, which measures participation in the labour market, has historically been a weak point for Northern Ireland in a UK context. Rates of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland have been consistently higher than in other regions of the UK and have on many occasions been more similar to those in the Republic of Ireland.

Economic inactivity increased dramatically during the pandemic but has since returned to its pre-crisis average. This recovery in economic activity occurred much more slowly in Northern Ireland than it did in the Republic of Ireland. Consequently, Northern Ireland has fallen behind when compared to both the UK and the Republic of Ireland. While the rate of economic inactivity has remained somewhat higher in the rest of the UK, this has been due to older workers existing the labour market. This trend has not been observed in Northern Ireland so far, with the profile of economic inactivity returning to what it was pre-pandemic.

Employment levels have increased significantly on their pre-pandemic levels and consequently the unemployment rate has also decreased. Male employment

rates increased from 73.7% to 75%. while female employments rates increased from 65.8% to 68.4%. The extraordinary measures put in place during the pandemic ensured that the unemployment rate never increased beyond 4.5% for the entire period. That level of job retention along with the increased demand for labour following the reopening of the economy have led to a very tight labour market overall. Such a scenario should create an ideal environment for workers to seek greater increases in wages, but that has not been the case. Job creation over the last year has been strongest in the Professional Scientific and Technical sector (+12.5%), followed by Transportation and Storage (+7.1%) and Construction (+7.1%).

HIGH INFLATION AND A COST OF LIVING CRISIS

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The invasion of Ukraine created a still unfolding humanitarian disaster. The war also led to a surge in global energy and food prices and triggered a cost-of-living crisis in many countries. Inflationary pressures had already been building in most OECD countries after a decade of extremely low inflation in the Euro area and in many other advanced economies.

The inflationary pressures began to meaningfully take hold in the Euro area in the second half of 2021. Price pressures were initially related to a mismatch between pent-up

consumer and business demand on one side, and ongoing supply chain issues caused by transport bottlenecks, stop-start production, China's zero Covid strategy, and shortages of various inputs on the other side. The unwinding of Covid related base effects in energy and in various other commodities, alongside labour shortages and ongoing loose fiscal and monetary policy were also contributing to upward price pressure.

The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 further pushed energy and food prices higher. The input price shock then broadened into higher core inflation across the OECD. The Republic of Ireland's core inflation peaked at 5.8% in August 2022. Many OECD countries including the Republic saw inflation reach 40 year highs during the second half of 2022. The price of energy products rose by 41.1% in the Republic in 2022, while consumer price inflation (CPI) averaged 7.8%, peaking in the final guarter. Fearful of rising core inflation and of a wage price spiral taking root, central banks including the European Central Bank (ECB) responded via

monetary tightening, most notably a series of interest rates rises.

Overall, the CPI increased by 10% between 2019 and 2022. Analysis from the CSO showed that Irish inflation was highest for the lowest income households, with renters, lone parents, and rural dwellers also disproportionately affected by the price increases. Lower income households tend to have much less savings and capacity to absorb price increases. This cost-of-living crisis forced the government into making a series of fiscal interventions. Unfortunately, these interventions were generally untargeted and there was a dramatic increase in the deprivation rate from 13.8% of households in 2021 to 17.7% of households in 2022. Deprivation rates in 2022 were at crisis levels for the unemployed (48.6%), people with disabilities (44.3%), and lone parents (43.5%). The dysfunction in the housing market led house prices to rise by 25.9% over the three years thereby further pushing home ownership out of reach for younger generations and exacerbating inheritance inequalities.

Table 3 Inflation and deprivation in the Republic of Ireland, % annual change

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	0.9	-0.3	2.4	7.8
CPI (energy products)	1.2	-4.9	12.6	41.1
Core inflation (excludes energy and unprocessed food)	1.0	0.1	1.2	5.0
Deprivation rate (% of households)	17.8	14.3	13.8	17.7

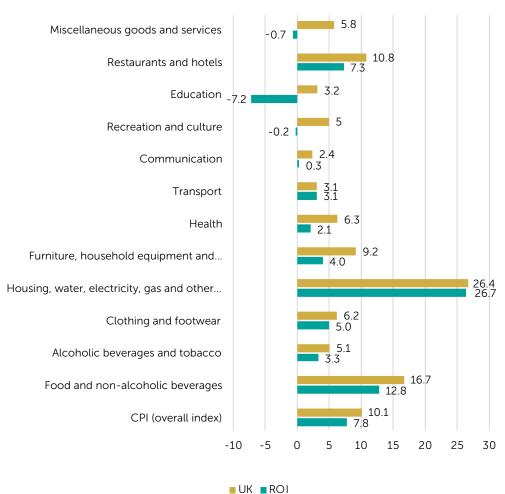


NORTHERN IRELAND

The increase in the price level in Northern Ireland can also be seen in two phases, owing firstly to the pandemic and subsequently to the energy crisis. While the dramatic increase in the price of energy is the most prominent factor in the cost-of-living crisis that we are currently experiencing, it is worth noting that inflation over the last number of years has been consistently higher in Northern Ireland. In particular, the devaluation of Sterling following

the 2016 referendum led to a rate of inflation in Northern Ireland that has been far higher than that of Ireland or the Euro Area. In the four years between 2016 and 2020, prices in the Republic of Ireland increased by 1.8%. In the same time in Northern Ireland, prices increased by 7.1%. Importantly, as the UK left the European Union in 2020, food inflation has also been markedly higher and this has remained the case throughout the current crisis, notwithstanding the impact of both the pandemic and the energy crisis.

Chart 1 Annual changes in Consumer Price Index by goods January 2023



In Northern Ireland, the UK rate of inflation peaked at 11.1% in November 2022 and has followed a slow rate of decline since then. While the rate of inflation may have eased this does not mean that the prices have come down, rather it means they have stopped growing. The inflation crisis may end, but the cost-of-living crisis will continue. This is because all those months of inflation have built up leaving prices at an elevated level from which they may not come down. It creates a large gap between the price level and the level of wages that remains long after inflation comes down.

RISING WAGES AND FALLING LIVING STANDARDS

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The tight labour market and the rising price pressures have led to substantial increases in nominal wages. Average weekly earnings in the final quarter of 2022 were up 4.2% on the same period in 2021. Unfortunately, the increases have generally not kept up with CPI inflation (7.8% in 2022), and consequently real disposable incomes and living standards fell for most workers in 2022. From a three year perspective (CPI of 10%) we can see (Table 4) that real weekly wages were positive for most sectors, with information and communications the best performer (21.9%). The exceptions were the relatively low pay wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services, and transportation and storage sectors.

The same broad pattern holds for average hourly wages with the exception that average hourly wage growth in accommodation and food services has grown faster than inflation over the three year period while the arts, entertainment and recreation sector has fallen behind. Average hourly earnings rose 5.5% annually in the last quarter of 2022, while average hours worked fell by 1.2%. Average paid hours were the same in the final quarter of 2022 as they were in the final quarter of 2019 at 32.5 hours. The construction sector has the longest average work week.

The wage differentials between the sectors are stark. Average weekly earnings in the accommodation and food services sector (mainly restaurants and hotels) is just 27% of average weekly earnings in the information and communication sector. The Republic of Ireland has one of the highest levels of market income inequality in the EU. The minimum wage was increased from €10.10 to €11.30 (11.2%) over the three years representing a modest real increase but falling behind average hourly wage growth.



Table 4 Average weekly and hourly earnings by sector in the Republic of Ireland, nearest €, Q4

	Weekly 2019	Weekly 2022	2019 – 22 (% change)	Hourly 2019	Hourly 2022	2019 – 22 (% change)
Industry	915	1009	10.2	23.98	26.67	11.2
Construction	841	940	10.9	22.74	24.90	9.5
Wholesale, retail, motor repair	603	652	8.1	19.80	21.47	8.4
Transportation & storage	828	863	4.2	23.66	23.78	0.5
Accommodation δ food services	379	409	7.9	13.67	15.33	12.1
Information & communication	1240	1512	21.9	33.64	40.57	20.6
Financial, insurance & real estate	1130	1256	11.2	32.46	36.21	11.6
Professional, scientific, technical	974	1085	11.4	28.26	31.43	11.2
Administration & support	626	704	12.5	19.27	21.97	14.0
Public administration & defence	976	1117	14.4	26.56	31.89	20.1
Education	881	1000	13.5	36.91	42.29	14.6
Human health & social work	751	868	15.6	23.69	27.32	15.3
Arts, entertainment, recreation	523	582	11.3	18.85	20.35	8.0
Private Sector	726	831	14.5	22.40	25.48	13.8
Public sector	991	1133	14.3	30.43	35.33	16.1
All	786	900	14.5	24.23	27.72	14.4

NORTHERN IRELAND

Wages

Average (median) full-time weekly earnings in Northern Ireland grew by 2.9% in 2022. Following a large drop in 2020 and equally large swing back in 2021, wages in Northern Ireland have largely returned to their pre-pandemic trend. However, when adjusted for inflation, real full-time weekly earnings fell by 4.5%. In the public sector, wages grew by an average of 3.1% which resulted in a real terms reduction of 4.3% over the year to 2022. In the private sector, there was much more robust growth of 7.3% in nominal earnings which resulted in a much smaller real terms drop of 0.1%.

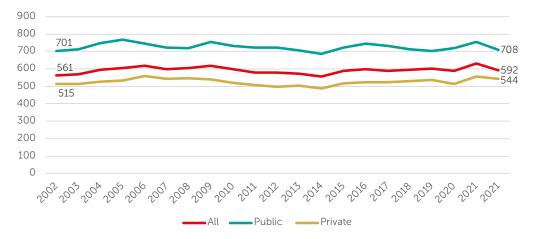
The largest increases in pay were recorded in three sectors, Accommodation and Food, Wholesale and Retail and Administration. These three sectors have amongst the lowest wages of any sector of the economy and therefore still benefit from annual increases in the National Living Wage. Information and Communication

is the only sector with a high wage profile that has shown significant growth over the last number of years.

Whilst price pressures are largely responsible for the fall in real earnings over the last year, the performance of wages in Northern Ireland over the last two decades has also contributed to the situation the economy now finds itself. As the chart below shows, Northern Ireland has seen minimal real wage growth over the past 20 years. Average weekly pay in real terms is only £31 above what it was in 2002 and is £27 below what it was in 2006.

Real public sector pay has actually fallen over the last decade and is only £7 above what it was in 2002. Private sector earnings have grown more over the last 20 years, but are still below their 2007 level. The results from the private sector reflect the productivity figures mentioned previously and once again highlight the need for a coordinated industrial strategy for Northern Ireland that can deliver investment and ultimately better pay.

Chart 2 Real Average Weekly Wages in Northern Ireland, Public and Private Sector 2002-22



THE PUBLIC FINANCES

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Irish government responded rapidly and robustly to Covid 19 in 2020-21 with a fiscal expansion characterised by a range of household and business supports and by additional spending on health services. This fiscal stance replicated the response taken across Europe and North America and was facilitated by the pausing of fiscal rules, support from the monetary authorities, and very low interest rates. While these supports were gradually unwound by early 2022 the government subsequently responded to the costof-living crisis with a package of income supports in mid-2022 and another expansive budget in late 2022.

The Irish government's budgetary position is strong in the short-term notwithstanding the loosening of fiscal policy. There was a general government surplus of €5.2 billion in 2022 due to a surprise yearon-year increase of €7.3 billion in corporation tax receipts (from €15.3 billion to €22.6 billion). It is unclear the extent to which these receipts are sustainable over the medium-term. Income tax receipts increased €4.1 billion year-on-year. This reflects strong growth in employment and a shift in the composition of the workforce towards higher valueadded activities. VAT receipts also grew strongly. Overall, tax receipts are up 40% versus the pre-pandemic period. Current public spending remained stable between 2021 and

2022 as increases in other areas were offset by a decrease in social protection of €6 billion.

However, the medium-term fiscal picture is less rosy. The sustainability of corporation tax receipts is unclear and the housing crisis will eventually require a very significant direct fiscal intervention. In addition, the ageing of the population and the need to pay for investments in the net zero transition will add substantially to public spending. The report of the independent Commission on Tax and Welfare was clear that government revenues will, over the mediumto-long term, need to meaningfully increase as a percentage of national income.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland's public finances have suffered from two major political setbacks during 2022. Firstly, the tumult that accompanied the UK mini-budget in September unleashed a fiscal panic which has led to greater fiscal retrenchment overall. While the reckless tax cuts contained in the mini-budget were reversed, the Autumn Statement also set out a very harsh profile of public spending in the years to come. Secondly, the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive meant that the Budget for Northern Ireland had to be legislated for by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in Westminster. This budgetary process had minimal political oversight, but made significant spending decisions, particularly related to education.

The Autumn Statement updated the plans for public spending in Northern Ireland for the years leading up to 2025. Current spending which is used to fund day to day public services, is to remain essentially flat rising from £13.4bn in 2022/23 to £13.6bn in 2024/25. More worryingly capital expenditure which funds investment is set to fall from £2.1bn in 2022/23 to £1.8bn in 2024/25. When the effects of inflation are taking into account, these are substantial real terms cuts to both current and capital spending. This financial envelope will greatly constrain any Northern Ireland Executive. The Autumn Statement also set out plans beyond 2025, but this will be after the next UK general election and so do not represent government policy.

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSIONS

BUDGET 2022 AND BUDGET 2023

The Congress pre-budget recommendation for Budget 2022 No Going Back: For A Fairer Future (September 2021) was the second to be issued since the start of the pandemic. It urged the government not to embark on an austerity agenda but to continue to support employment and the economy, to increase spending on health, housing, early years, education, and the green and digital transitions, and for social welfare increases in excess of inflation.

The Congress pre-budget recommendation for Budget 2023 Raising Wages, Reducing Living Costs (August 2022) was presented in the context of the highest inflation in

almost four decades. It called on the government to introduce a series of targeted measures to raise wages and incomes, especially for low-paid workers and low-income households, to reduce electricity, early years, transport, health, and educational costs, and for increased expenditure on housing, health, early years, education, and the green and digital transitions. It urged the government to abandon its tax cutting agenda and to begin the process of raising the additional revenue needed to meet the medium and long-term challenges posed by demographic change and the green transition, such as by raising employers' and self-employed PRSI rates up to the European average and by reforming Ireland's system of very generous tax breaks for businesses and highincome individuals.

Both of these budgets were delivered during the suspension of EU fiscal rules since the start of the pandemic. In November 2022, the European Commission issued proposals to revise these rules. It wants member states to reach agreement on new rules ahead of the 2024 budgetary process.

Pre-Budget Submission 2022





Owen Reidy and members NIC ICTU meet Labour leader Keir Starmer, Peter Kyle and Lady Basildon in January 2023

The vote taken in 2016 by the **UK to leave the EU continues** to cast a long shadow over Northern Ireland. The particular type of Brexit which the Tory government insisted upon was always going to destabilise the finely balanced constitutional settlement within Northern Ireland.

We have been consistent and clear that we needed to avoid a border in the Irish sea and also one on land. The protocol with all its imperfections while necessary (a protocol of some description was always going to be necessary given the type of Brexit insisted upon by the UK government),

has continued to cause political instability. Stormont has been down, again for over 12 months with on this occasion the DUP refusing to nominate a speaker.

Relations between the EU and the UK government had been bedevilled by a lack of trust and consistency given the chaotic behaviour of the previous two Tory Prime Ministers, Johnson and Truss. However, in recent times the space and capacity has opened up to engage and ultimately reach an agreement known as the Windsor Framework.

Congress has engaged as part of a wider civic society coalition with both the EU Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič and the NIO. We have consistently advocated dialogue and compromise. Any arrangement that can be agreed between the parties to make the

lives of people in Northern Ireland smoother is to be welcomed. Any agreement that makes what has been a very hard Brexit more flexible is positive.

We continue to work closely as part of the Equality Coalition to protect the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and seek to ensure as much alignment as possible between the EU and the UK. Congress is also engaged in both the EU and UK Domestic Action Groups seeking to maintain the TCA. We engaged with the EESC working group on the future EU/UK relations also and gave evidence to the group and contributed to their report.

We have met with the NIO on the issue of the Windsor Framework. We have engaged with the Irish government through the Brexit stakeholder forum chaired by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin. While we support this new agreement and we believe the DUP and others need time and space to consider their response to this important initiative, we cannot have a reopening of the 1998 legislation by way of inducement to one party or grouping to encourage them to agree to move forward.

Congress continues to use its relationships with the trade union confederations on these islands and the ETUC to articulate our position on Brexit, the protocol and indeed on the Windsor Agreement. We continue to have engagement with the Shadow Secretary of State for NI, Peter Kyle MP and earlier this year a delegation led by our new Assistant General Secretary, Gerry Murphy met with the Minister of State for NI, Steve Baker MP.

It is frustrating and indeed tragic that NI has been held back politically, economically and socially by Brexit and its resulting arrangements.



SECTION

THE WORK OF CONGRESS



THE WORK OF CONGRESS

I. INDUSTRIAL, LEGISLATION & ORGANISING

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The period since our last conference in Belfast has been very significant for collective bargaining in the Republic of Ireland. Delegates will remember that at our conference in Trinity College in Dublin in 2019 we presented a paper on collective bargaining in Ireland in comparison to other EU states. Since that period Congress has been working at home and at European level to improve the context in which our unions bargain.

Congress under our previous General Secretary Patricia King advocated a working group to look at industrial relations and collective bargaining in Ireland. The Taoiseach agreed via the LEEF (Labour Employer Economic Forum) process to set up a tripartite body of the government, the employers and Congress. The working group was chaired by Maynooth academic Michael Doherty. Our team was composed of Patricia King General Secretary, Kevin Callinan, Congress President and Joe Cunningham, Congress Treasurer.

The body worked from mid-2021 to September 2022. The government accepted and published the report,

the Final Report of the LEEF on the Future of Collective Bargaining, in October 2022. The report advocates the abolition of the employers' veto when it comes to the operation of Joint Labour Committees (JLCs). The thinking being that more employers will therefore come to the bargaining table and the number of JLCs that have been dormant for many years will become active, whereby unions and employers will bargain legally binding terms for the given industry in the form of an ERO (Employment Regulation Order).

The report also proposed good faith engagement bargaining at firm level. This process will compel the parties to engage but will not compel the parties to reach a specific agreed outcome. This is important for the trade union movement as we will always reserve our right to accept or reject any negotiated proposal and withdraw our labour when and if necessary. The report also highlights a clear dispute procedure on the procedural issues around good faith engagement. The process of legislating for the report will be crucial and will be conducted under the auspices of the LEEF employment rights sub-committee which is chaired by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. We expect this process to conclude in 2024.



The Future of Collective Bargaining Seminar 3 April 2023. Credit: Maxwells

The work above has taken place against the backdrop of the EU Adequate Minimum Wages Directive, the first draft of which was published in October 2020. Congress has worked very closely with the ETUC in seeking to ensure that the Directive is as favourable as possible to the trade union movement. The objective of the directive was to promote collective bargaining and greater collective bargaining coverage to address declining wages across Member States.

Congress was represented at the ETUC by the new General Secretary and former Assistant General Secretary, Owen Reidy and Social Policy Officer, Ger Gibbons. The working group met over 30 times and met with Commissioner Schmit and the Parliament Co-Rapporteurs Agnes Jongerius and Dennis Radtke who negotiated on behalf of the MEPs. We also took the opportunity to lobby Irish MEPs on this issue with all MEPs voting in favour of the directive.

The directive was finalised and agreed in October 2022 and Member States have until November 2024 to

transpose into national law. Congress has made it clear to government at the LEEF process that the transposition of the directive and the legislation for the High-Level Group Report are the key priorities of the Irish trade union movement. The directive has an implicit target to increase collective bargaining coverage to 80% across the EU. Currently the EU average in 60% and in Ireland it is as low as 35%. The government is obliged to strengthen the capacity of social partners to engage in collective bargaining and to promote collective bargaining like never before. We believe it is essential that the issue of public procurement is used as a lever to promote collective bargaining and the issue of union access must be addressed once and for all.

The Congress Private Sector Committee convened and held a seminar in April 2023 in the CWU offices on the *Future of Collective Bargaining*. The seminar brought together 80 officials and organisers from a range of affiliates to discuss and debate both initiatives to ensure



the trade union movement maximises this once in a generation opportunity to move forward on collective bargaining rights and trade union rights. We will engage in negotiations with the government and employers on the transposition of the directive from Autumn 2023 onwards.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Since the last Biennial Delegate Conference in 2021, collective bargaining and industrial relations has been influenced by three main factors - the continued recovery from Covid 19, the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the cost-of-living crisis brought about by the very high rates of price inflation. For unions in the private sector this has meant that their main focus was securing wage increases for workers.

The Private Sector Committee of Congress continues to play a key role in co-ordinating the work of unions in the private sector. Co-ordination of pay bargaining has been a particular focus of the committee since the last BDC in October 2021. This is pursued through the development, periodically, of pay bargaining guidance.

In December 2021 the Committee issued guidance to unions in which it advised that they should seek pay increases in the range 2.5% to 4.5% in pay bargaining negotiations during 2022. However, as the rate of

price inflation began to increase in early 2022 the Committee decided to revise the guidance for that year. In February 2022 the Committee advised that unions should seek pay increases in the range 2.5% to 5.5%.

It should be noted that the CSO have calculated that earnings in the Republic of Ireland rose by 4.2% during 2022, which is within the range advised by the Private Sector Committee for that year.

In December 2022 the Committee issued guidance on pay bargaining for 2023. In developing guidance, the Committee was mindful of the prevailing high rate of price inflation and the strength of the labour market. The Committee also paid particular attention to the core rate of inflation as it is this metric that has the most impact on the purchasing power of workers. In light of these factors the Committee have recommended that unions seek pay increases in the ranges 4% to 7.5% in pay bargaining negotiations in 2023.

It should be noted that the Committee bargaining guidance is made available to the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court.

In the coming period the Private Sector Committee will be focused on the implementation of the Report of the High-Level Group on Collective Bargaining and the transposition into Irish law of the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

Sectoral collective bargaining remains an important part of the industrial relations landscape in the Republic of Ireland. Joint Labour Committees

(JLCs) which provide for the setting of minimum terms and conditions of employment continue to operate. However, because of a significant flaw in legislation their operation can be vetoed by employers. Currently there are nine established JLCs, of which four are active. Employment Regulation Orders (EROs) are currently in place for two of these JLCs namely, contract cleaning and early years. There is a proposed ERO in the Security Industry JLC however this may be subject to a legal challenge by a small number of employers in the sector. Discussions are underway at the English Language JLC with a view to agreeing a first ERO for that sector. The remaining five JLCs have not met due to the unwillingness of employers to co-operate with their operation. As referenced earlier the Report of the LEEF High-Level Group on Collective Bargaining has proposed significant reforms to the operation of the JLC system which should allow them to operate as mandated.

The other legal mechanism that provides for sectoral collective bargaining are Sectoral Employment Orders (SEOs). The SEO mechanism has been available since the enactment of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015. While SEOs could be used in any sector of the economy, to-date, they have been used in construction, electrical contracting and mechanical engineering contracting. During the period covered by this report the Labour Court has made a recommendation to the Minister for a further SEO in the Construction Sector. However, attempts to have SEOs made for the electrical contracting and mechanical engineering sectors have

been stalled by legal challenges by a small number of employers in each sector.

The effective functioning of a reformed JLC mechanism and the SEO mechanisms will be crucial to government achieving the target of 80% of collective bargaining coverage as required by the EU Adequate Minimum Wages Directive.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

For the period under review, union members in the Public Service were covered by the terms of the Public Service Agreement – Building Momentum. The Building Momentum Agreement was negotiated in late 2020, the process in its entirety around consultation, negotiation and balloting was interrupted by the necessary restrictions imposed due to Covid 19.

The pay provisions of the agreement were modest, mindful of the circumstances prevalent in society and the economy at the time, with low inflation, exceptional levels of exchequer borrowing to fund a wage subsidy scheme and social protection measures necessary to support workers and their families in the private sector, and the general uncertainty about the medium to long-term implications of the effect of Covid on the economy. Thankfully there was no significant impact on our country's



Kevin Callinan Congress President and Chair Public Sector Committee.

economic performance, and private sector employment rebounded as the Covid restrictions were gradually eased.

However, over the course of 2021 and particularly in early 2022, the Public Service Committee became increasingly concerned that the rate of inflation and the likely trajectory of the cost-of-living over 2022 had eroded completely the value of the pay terms agreed in the Public Service Agreement and if not addressed were likely to result in a significant reduction in living standards. In March 2022, at its AGM, the Public Services Committee mandated the Officers of the PSC to invoke Clause 5.7 of the Building Momentum Agreement as the underlying assumptions of the agreement no longer applied.

Over the months following the AGM the Officers of the PSC engaged with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) officials on an agreed

strategy which aimed at re-visiting the pay terms of the agreement. In May 2022 the government acknowledged that there had been a shift in the underlying assumptions.

During the following month talks facilitated by the WRC failed to find an acceptable proposal that addressed the widening gap between pay and the increasing rate of inflation, and its impact on the value of workers' pay. The talks adjourned on the basis that they would reconvene following a period of reflection by the employer-side represented by DPER. Government figures made public statements suggesting that there would be a revised offer.

However, following a lengthy period without further engagement and no indication of intent on the part of the employer to re-engage, the Public Services Committee decided to embark on a course of industrial and strike action in a coordinated manner across the Public Service. Action was



to commence in the third week of September 2022, allowing affiliate unions the necessary time to consult with and ballot their membership. As the date of action neared, the WRC intervened again, at the request of the employer-side and talks recommenced on Monday 29 August 2022.

Following lengthy talks facilitated by the WRC, a set of proposals emerged which the PSC Officers decided were worthy of consideration by union members in the Public Sector. Other than the pay terms, the only material change to the provisions of *Building Momentum* was in relation to its duration which is now extended out until the end of 2023.

For the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023, the main provisions of Building Momentum and the Extension to Building Momentum provide for the following measures.

PAY

1 October 2021	1% of annualised pay or €500 a year, whichever is greater
2 February 2022	3% of annualised pay
1 October 2022	1% of annualised pay or €500 a year, whichever is greater
1 March 2023	2% of annualised pay
1 October 2023	1.5% of annualised pay or €750 a year, whichever is greater

SECTORAL FUND

Establishment of a Sectoral Fund worth 1% of basic pensionable pay to deal with grade-related outstanding awards, recommendations and adjudications and with the option for groups to use this available allocation as a general pay round to be implemented on 1 February 2022.

REMOVAL OF HADDINGTON ROAD AGREEMENT (HRA) AUSTERITY MEASURES

- Restoration of overtime rates, premium payments, tool allowance to the pre-HRA 2013 levels, with effect from 1 July 2021
- A further measure to address the new entrant teacher issue for cohort recruited after January 2011 through the introduction of an additional 'skipped' point on the pay-scale
- An independent body was established to examine and make a report to government to deal with the issue of the 2013 Pre-HRA Additional Hours. This body reported in January 2022 and its recommendations were implemented with effect from 1 July 2022

The original *Building Momentum* Agreement concluded in late 2020/ early 2021 was accepted by a large majority of affiliate members. All unions confirmed their acceptance of the aggregate outcome. The terms of the extension were ratified unanimously on 7 October 2022.



The officers of the Public Sector Committee are Kevin Callinan (Chair), John King (Secretary), Phil Ní Shéaghdha (Vice-Chair) and John Boyle (Vice-Chair).

INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

The Congress Construction Industry Committee (CIC) brings together the five affiliated unions representing workers in the construction sector. The CIC is recognised by the main employer organisation the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) for collective bargaining purposes.

Since 2016 the minimum rates of pay, pension and sick pay for workers in construction have been determined through Sectoral Employment Orders (SEO). There have been four SEOs in the construction sector to-date. The SEOs have provided for the following pay increases.

Table 5 SEO pay increases in Construction Sector

Date	Increase in Basic Pay
October 2017	10%
October 2019	2.7%
October 2020	2.7%
February 2022	2.8%
February 2023	2.8%
September 2023	1.9%
August 2024	3.5%

While the SEOs are a very important instrument in setting certain minimum terms and conditions of employment, matters not covered by the SEO are bargained through the National Joint Industrial Council (NJIC).

There continues to be a high incidence of bogus self-employment in the construction sector. In response to a Congress demand for action on this issue, a working group was established to make recommendations to government, and it is expected that the group will report to government during 2023.

The Officers of the CIC are Andy Smith (Chair), Andrew McGuinness (Secretary) and Barry Murphy (Vice-Chair).

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

In November 2021 the unions with members in the Community and the voluntary sector (Fórsa, INMO and SIPTU) came together under the auspices of Congress to launch the Valuing Care – Valuing Community Campaign.

The aim of the campaign was to highlight the work done by workers in the sector and to secure pay increases. Many workers in the sector have not received a pay increase since 2008.

Following the launch of the campaign we sought to engage with the government departments who fund the sector, however their refusal to engage led to hundreds of workers taking part in industrial action during 2022.

In late 2022 the unions involved made two referrals to the WRC; the first on behalf of workers in Section 39, Section 56 and Section 10 organisations, and a second on behalf of workers whose schemes were mainly funded by the Department of Social Protection.

In early 2023 following an intervention by the WRC, the Department of Social Protection made an offer to settle the dispute for workers in Community Employment Schemes, in the Rural Social Scheme, Tús and the Job Initiative Scheme. The offer included a 5% pay increase for 2023 plus a commitment to engage with the unions on an annual basis, starting in 2023, to discuss the issues of funding linked to remuneration of workers on these schemes.

In April 2023, the WRC convened a meeting to deal with the issues as they relate to Sections 39, 56 and Section 10 workers. While no progress was made at the initial meeting, at time of writing further meetings were planned.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AVIATION SECTOR

The period in review saw the aviation sector largely recover to prepandemic levels of activity. The main focus of the unions involved was to seek pay increases for workers in the sector. The Congress supported union groups in the Dublin Airport Authority and Aer Lingus secured multi-annual pay agreements for workers in those companies.

A sub-group of the Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF) was established during the pandemic and it continues to meet to deal with strategic issues in the sector.

In the period in review the Commission for Aviation Regulation conducted a review of landing charges at Dublin Airport and Congress made a detailed submission to the review.

Congress provided assistance to the unions with members in the Irish Aviation Authority as the IAA went through a very significant restructuring.

PUBLIC WATER SERVICES

For the last number of years government has been moving to implement their public water reform programme. This programme envisages that Irish Water will assume full control for the operation of the public water service and that Local Authorities will no longer have a role in the provision of the service.

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

While Congress argued for a continuation of Local Authority involvement in the provision of the service, we had insisted that in moving to implement its reform programme government must ensure:

- · that no Local Authority worker will be forced to transfer to Irish Water
- that workers who choose to remain in their Local Authority will retain their current terms and conditions of employment
- that workers who choose to transfer to Irish Water would do so on no less favourable terms and conditions of employment
- that a constitutional referendum would be held the objective of which would be to ensure that Irish Water could never be privatised

In June 2022, following a number of meetings held under the auspices of the WRC, the Department of Housing, Local government and Heritage published a 'Framework for Future Delivery of Water Services'. This framework outlined the approach to the implementation of the government's policy. It confirmed that workers in Local Authorities would not be compelled to transfer to Irish Water and that they would retain their current terms and conditions of employment. It also confirmed that workers opting to transfer to Irish Water would do so on no less favourable terms than those they enjoyed in Local Authority employment.

Separately, the Department of Housing, Local government and Heritage confirmed that it was the Minister's intention to bring a recommendation to government on the holding a referendum in 2023.

At the time of writing there was still work ongoing in relation to the interpretation of certain matters in the 'Framework for the Future Delivery of Water Services'.

A key element of the government reform programme was separation of Irish Water from Ervia and the creation of a stand-alone national public water authority. In January 2023, Uisce Éireann was established. Patricia King was appointed to the Board of Uisce Éireann in 2023 following a nomination by Congress.

COMMISSION ON THE DEFENCE FORCES

In December 2020, the government announced the establishment of a Commission on the Defence Forces. Shay Cody the former General Secretary of Fórsa was appointed to the Commission.



Patricia King with Ger Guinan PDFORRA General Secretary and Mark Keane PDFORRA President.

The Commission sought submissions from interested groups to inform its recommendations to government. Congress made a detailed submission to the Commission arguing that members of the Defence Forces should be treated no less favourably than any other worker in Ireland. We also argued that if the representative organisations of members of the Defence Forces sought to affiliate to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions that

The Report of the Commission was published in February 2022 and a High-Level Action Plan on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission was published in July 2022.

they should be permitted to do so.

In its report the Commission recommended that 'On the issue of pay bargaining, the Commission believes that the Defence Forces' representative bodies should be active participants in future public service pay bargaining processes and recommends that they should be facilitated if they wish to pursue associate membership of ICTU'.

Following this recommendation PDFORRA and RACO applied for Associate Membership of Congress. Their applications were approved in the second quarter of 2022.

Both PDFORRA and RACO played an active role in the negotiations that led to the extension of the Building Momentum Public Service Pay Agreement.



Associate Members RACO.

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

APPRENTICESHIPS

We reported in the Executive Council Report to BDC 2021 that government has commenced a consultation process on a new Apprenticeship Action Plan from 2021–2025.

One of the main governance reforms envisaged in the Action Plan was the creation of a New National Apprenticeship Office and the creation of a National Apprenticeship Alliance to replace the Apprenticeship Council.

The National Apprentice Alliance was established on the 24 March 2022. It is envisaged in the Apprenticeship Action Plan that the new Apprenticeship Alliance will have an advisory role in relation to the development of the apprenticeship system and will oversee and sanction the development of new apprenticeships over the coming years. Paddy Kavanagh and Karan O'Loughlin are the current Congress nominees on the National Apprenticeship Alliance.

In February 2023 a delegation from Congress met with the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Mr. Simon Harris TD. The meeting had been sought by Congress to discuss ongoing concerns with amongst other things:

- the implementation of the Action Plan for Apprenticeship
- the failure to meet certain targets in the Action Plan
- the role of the public sector in the delivery of apprenticeship training
- the rate of pay for apprentices

It was agreed that because many of the issues raised would require a 'whole of government response' a further engagement would be arranged for the Labour Employer Economic Forum.



INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES - REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The table below provides a list of industrial disputes that occurred in the Republic of Ireland and notified to the Congress Executive Council in the period covered by this report.

The CSO collects data on the number of industrial disputes that occurred in each year and the number of days lost as a result of these disputes. In 2021 the CSO recorded four industrial disputes involving 548 workers with 1,540 days lost as a result of these disputes.

In the first two quarters of 2022 two industrial disputes were recorded involving 2,710 workers with 3,037 days lost. Data on industrial disputes can be obtained from the CSO website.

Table 6 Industrial Disputes notified to Congress Oct (2021-March 2023)

Year	Dispute	Union(s) Involved
2021	Abbvie	SIPTU
	DePuy Synthes	SIPTU
	Stryker	SIPTU
	Rehab Enterprises	SIPTU
	Lisk Ireland	SIPTU
2022	Pinewood Healthcare Ltd	SIPTU
	Bausch & Lomb	SIPTU
	Tipperary Co-Op	SIPTU
	Kostal	SIPTU
	Liebherr Container Cranes Ltd	SIPTU
	Kyte Powertech	SIPTU
	Apple	SIPTU
	Community and Voluntary Sector	Fórsa/INMO/SIPTU
	DAA Cork Airport	SIPTU
	Zeneth Energy Cork	SIPTU
	Smurfit Kappa	Unite
2023	Cargotech	Unite

THE WORKPLACE RELATIONS **COMMISSION**

The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) continues to play a crucial role in assisting unions to resolve disputes and ensuring that workers can vindicate their employment rights.

The WRC provides a range of services including conciliation, mediation, adjudication, advisory, inspection and information. The table below shows the level of activity in each of these categories.

Table 7 Workplace Relations Commission Level of Activity in Each Category

Activity	2021	2022
Conciliation		
Conferences	996	744
Facilitation	273	219
Mediation		
Telephone	350	261
Face to Face	151*	397*
Adjudication		
Complaints	12,014	12,790
Hearings Held	3,320	4,253
Decisions	1,549	1,968
Advisory		
New Projects	13	12
Inspection		
Concluded	4432	3943**
Wages Recovered	€964,281	€1,405,126
Prosecutions		69***
Information		
Calls Answered	55,810	59,782
Web Visits	3.4 million	4.2 million

^{*}Includes virtual mediations**This figure does not include 725 visits in Dec *** Includes Charitable and Court Donations

While the previous table provides a general overview of the work of the WRC over the period covered by this report, we would like to point to

 The bulk of disputes, 44%, referred to the WRC conciliation service were concerned with pay

some specific highlights as follows:

- The use of mediation as a first stage in employment rights disputes continues to grow. The rate of increase in the use of mediation was 31% in 2022 when compared with 2021. The average settlement at mediation was €8,820
- The number of complaints received by the Adjudication Service of the WRC increased by 4.5% in 2022 compared with 2021. A total of 1,968 decisions were issued by the adjudication service in 2022
- The information and customer service division of the WRC answered in excess of 100,000

- telephone queries over the period The WRC website had over 7.5 million hits
- The WRC inspection service recovered €2.36 million in unpaid wages. In 2022 €492,754 in unpaid wages was recovered for workers in the Food Services Sector

The WRC Board consists of two members appointed to represent the interests of workers, Ethel Buckley and George Maybury. David Begg, former General Secretary of Congress is the current Chairperson of the WRC.

THE LABOUR COURT

The Labour Court is the court of last resort in industrial relations disputes and employment rights disputes. The table below provides detail on the activity of the Court across the main areas of its jurisdiction in 2021 and 2022.

Table 8 Activity of Labour Court across main areas of Jurisdiction 2021/2022

Category	2021	2022
Industrial Relations Cases	208	185
Equality Cases	51	35
Unfair Dismissals Cases	90	89
Working Times Cases	20	59
Payment of Wages Cases	27	61
Terms of Employment – Information Cases	24	22
Transfer of Undertakings	4	12
Redundancy Payments Cases	22	14
Minimum Notice Cases	14	16
Minimum Wage Cases	2	2
Part Time Working Cases	1	1
Fixed Term Working Cases	1	4
Other Cases	26	21



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

ROI TRADES COUNCILS

Established as part of the Covid response, the Trades Councils Network (TCN) met monthly online to network, discuss work programmes, BDC motions, local campaigns, SPC motions, establish regional links, and build visibility.

Discussions started in September 2021 to establish a Meath Trades Council with the Council established in March 2022.

Development work was undertaken from 2021 into 2022 to write a specific training and education programme for Trades Councils to equip them to build local campaigns, particularly in advance of Local Elections.

The Chair of the Wexford Trades Council and Congress Co-ordinator worked together to map the community partnerships nationwide and identify union nominees on their boards of management.

Several SPC rep networks were established (based on Committee themes) to discuss committee agendas, identify supports required and develop a programme of action.

Beginning in March 2022, the TCN audit (in response to Motion 8 BDC 2021) of 15 Councils ended in June with the report and final recommendations submitted to Congress in August 2022. A comprehensive questionnaire

was devised, and the audit was conducted with two officers of each Council Executive (primarily Chair & Secretary) using an online platform to ensure the information gathered was an accurate reflection of their work at local level.

NI TRADES COUNCILS

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

The Councils come together at the Trades Councils Consultative Committee (TCCC) to share information and initiatives, and to develop and coordinate joint campaigns.

All the Councils have been active in supporting unions engaging in industrial action in their areas and are actively involved in the *Worker's Demand Better* campaign. Examples of some of the other activities of Trades Councils include:

Ballymena and Antrim TC and Belfast TC actively assisted the RMT in organising and attending protest rallies at Larne port in response to scandalous decision of P&O Ferries to sack 800 workers.

Belfast Trades Council have run seminars on topics such as the Congress No Going Back policy paper, and the commemoration of the Outdoor Relief Struggle. They have participated in and organised events for May Day, International Women's Day, Pride, and have been engaged in a number of campaigns





Belfast Trades Council supporting NUJ strikers at Reach PLC. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

and protests, including in defence of the NIHE and supporting the Unite members in Regina Coeli Hostel.

Craigavon Trades Council have been supporting ethnic minority workers and lobbying ABC Council to introduce a Community Wealth Building programme.

Derry Trades Council have been engaged in a range of protest rallies around the cost-of-living crisis and social security deductions, and have organised a number of events including for May Day.

Fermanagh Trades Council were central to the campaign to protect surgical services at South West Acute Hospital and unveiled a new memorial marking Workers' Memorial in Enniskillen Brook Park.

Omagh Trades Council have been involved in the Save Our Sperrins campaign.

Omagh Trades Council has been actively involved in supporting migrant workers suffering exploitation in their area and organised a well-attended protest rally held in reaction to the attempted murder of PSNI Detective Chief Inspector John Caldwell.

Other issues Trades Councils have worked on include, supporting trade union recruitment campaigns; engaging with local media; protecting health services; campaigning against social and economic deprivation in local communities.



LOCAL TRADE UNION CENTRE (LTUC)

Limerick Trade Union Centre

Signage designs for the Limerick Local Trade Union Centre were agreed and work is progressing towards its launch later in the year.

Wexford Trade Union Centre

It was agreed in late 2021 that the SIPTU building in Wexford would become an LTUC with design work commencing in early 2022 and approved at the end of that year. The Wexford Trade Union Centre was officially launched in April 2023.

ONE Movement

ONE CONVERSATION – The making of an activist – beginning during the Covid 19 lockdown and continuing through 2022, 14 episodes were recorded featuring trade union and student activists, advertised through a parallel social media campaign highlighting the key issues discussed.

12 Days of Activism

This social media campaign published over Christmas 2021 highlighted activists' work country-wide, their motivations and achievements.



Wexford Trade Union Centre



Online and in-person workshops were delivered to the following schools during 2021-22:

- Kishoge Community College Clondalkin
- Lucan Community College
- St. Joseph's Lucan
- St. Killian's Community School Bray
- Portlaoise College

Working with the ISSU

Congress, SIPTU and Fórsa have worked together since 2009 to support ISSU through participation and facilitation at key events including:

- ISSU Annual Assembly (keynote address 2022 & 2023)
- ICTU-ISSU Skills Academy for Future Leaders 2021 & 2022 (shared organising & costs, workshop delivery, panel participation)
- ISSU Regional Officer training (facilitated the delivery of 15 activism and workers' rights workshops across the country during the 2021-2022 programme)
- Invitation to Congress BDC 2021 as a guest and to address the conference

Congress facilitated workshops between the ISSU Coiste Gnó (Student Executive), staff and their Board of Directors to establish key priorities, improve working processes, identify efficiencies, and utilise existing resources, resulting in several Board sub-committees established to drive change, adopt policy, and establish clear governance procedures.

ONE CORK

Restarting in March 2022 the following plans were agreed:

- Campaign to ensure the housing motions submitted to Cork City Council are implemented
- Collaborative local outreach events with youth groups and traveller groups. The Coordinator was interviewed by Cork Community Radio as part of this initiative
- Develop a Trade union society with UCC Students union
- Convene an Autumn Activist forum for information & engagement purposes
- Strengthen the relationship with student unions at second and third level

Housing Motions

The housing sub-group began developing a campaign to pressure Cork City Council to implement our motions on a) obliging contractors to establish apprenticeships on public construction contracts and b) establishing a task force to improve turn-around times on vacant social houses.

Cork Access Network (CAN)

Participating in this network of educational institutions in Cork to improve access to education for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, the following was organised:

 Webinar on New Department New Opportunities in FE HE, access, and progression



Joe Cunningham, SIPTU

- Leave No-One Behind Educational Seminar
- Workplace breakfast networking seminar in MTU

ONE GALWAY

Meeting for the first time in March 2022 due to Covid 19, the group agreed the following work programme for the year:

- May Day Street blitz with workers' rights information
- Trade Union Day in University Hospital Galway
- International migrant worker summer event
- Engagement with students unions at second and third levels including on-campus events
- Survey on working conditions for students to inform a campaign on sub-minima wage rates
- Conversational English classes

Tipping Campaign

ONE Galway continued to pursue the aims of the tipping campaign throughout 2021-2022 including submitting a significant number of amendments to the legislation in early 2022.

Following the implementation of the legislation ONE Galway continued their media blitz to raise awareness of the key elements of the law, but importantly to continue to draw attention to the precarious terms and conditions of workers in the hospitality sector.

There was a further opportunity to raise the profile of workers' conditions in this sector when the group presented a paper to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media in June 2022.

NUIG

ONE Galway presented their regular winter workshop on Workers' rights and the importance of workers' voice for MSc HR students.

SIPTU Galway District Council

Participated in a panel discussion for the Council on the importance of collaboration using the ONE Movement project and ONE Galway's successful tips campaign to illustrate the key elements.

Student Union Engagement

Agreement was made with ISSU during 2022 to partner in the development of a Regional Skills Academy in Galway (resource dependent) and contribute to student council training in the county.

Discussions began with NUIGSU on partnerships projects including a workers' rights information campaign, trade union society and on-campus events such as May Day.



THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS SECTOR GROUPS

RETAIL SECTOR GROUP

During the period under review, the Retail Sector Group has continued to engage with the Retail Forum that operates in the Republic of Ireland, under the auspices of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Congress is represented on the Forum by Mandate General Secretary, Gerry Light. The Forum has proved useful in terms of engagement with stakeholders across the sector and also input into policy formation.

Over the course of 2021/2022, the Forum commissioned a major piece of research (from KPMG) on the role and future of the sector, post-Covid, a study which Congress fed into through our representative.

The report was eventually published in October 2022, and contained a focus on training and upskilling of staff and also highlighted the need to ensure the "attractiveness of the retail sector as a long-term, financially viable career option."

Operating on an all-island basis, the Retail Group has prioritised the establishment of a similar stakeholder type forum in Northern Ireland, modelled on the Republic of Ireland example. However, progress on this was somewhat hampered by the political impasse that followed



INTO Members take to streets at Raise the Roof Rally.



the May 2022 Assembly elections. Nonetheless, group representatives did meet with the Retail NI employers' group in April 2022, which expressed its support for the creation of a forum.

At the time of writing, the group is pursuing meetings with relevant Northern Ireland Assembly political party spokespersons, to build support for the initiative. It is expected that meetings will take place with all key Northern Ireland parties, ahead of BDC 2023.

EDUCATION SECTOR GROUP

The focus of the Education Sector Group during the initial stage of the period under review was primarily on coordinating a coherent and agreed affiliate response to the phased re-opening of the Further and Higher Education Sector, as Covid 19 public health measures began to be unwound. This work took place through the stakeholder Covid 19 Steering Group that operated across the sector.

Throughout the process, the Congress Group worked to ensure that the phased reopening process was underpinned by clear and uniform public health guidelines and that there was consistent messaging and practice across institutions in the sector. This helped to ensure the overall success of the process.

The group also participated in a public consultation process around Leaving Cert reform and appeared before the Oireachtas Education Committee, in the course of hearings on this issue that took place in October 2021. In addition, the group also participated in a further consultation and additional hearings around the funding of further and higher education, which took place in March 2022. Congress used the opportunity to reinforce agreed policy on the need for an accessible and fully publicly-funded sector.



Phil Ni Sheaghdha General Secretary INMO

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS SECTOR GROUPS

On foot of the consultation process, the Department established a new Implementation Review Group on funding for the sector, in the early months of 2022. This saw the establishment of two Working Groups to examine key issues on this and, following engagement with the Department, Congress secured two representatives on each of the Working Groups. While there was some initial expectation that the review process might come to fruition ahead of Budget 2023, it remains in place and the Working Groups are continuing to meet and operate.

The Education Group is also currently working on an initial outline briefing on the development of a new overarching education and training/lifelong learning policy for the trade union movement.

HEALTH SECTOR GROUP

The primary focus of the Health Group was on the development of a new organising initiative within the private Nursing Home sector, one that could draw on the experience and lessons learned from *Big Start Campaign* in the Childcare sector.

In the initial phase, this involved developing a clearer picture of the sector here at home and globally, given the enormous levels of investment, acquisition and growth seen in recent years. Affiliates carried out research on key issues such as the financial business model that underpins the sector, in tandem with a closer look at the staffing and skills profile. The original research

was then pulled together in a single, overarching review of the sector and this then formed the basis for consideration by affiliates of the key issues and challenges that would confront any organising initiative or campaigning work.

On foot of these discussions among affiliates and within the wider group, it was agreed that more time and consideration would need to be given to the resources required for any such campaign - financial and otherwise - along with the timing of any such initiative.

It was agreed that affiliates would reconvene at a later stage for further discussions on this.

ENERGY SECTOR GROUP/JUST TRANSITION

Just Transition was and remains a trade union concept that seeks to ensure the gains produced by the move to a low carbon economy are shared equally and that no worker or community is left behind. The example of Bórd na Móna has, unfortunately, become a case study in how *not* to deliver on this.

A genuine Just Transition is based on social dialogue and proactive engagement with affected workers, enterprises and communities in order to draw up the agreed blueprint for this process of transformative change.

A key concern for Congress and the Energy Sector Group has been to ensure that government moves to urgently deliver on this and moves to set up structures such as a Just Transition Commission, that



can facilitate the process of social dialogue and engagement.

The 2022 Climate Action Plan (published December 2021) contained a commitment to establish such a Commission, but was somewhat vague on timelines and detail. As part of our campaign on this, representatives of the **Energy Sector Group engaged** with the Oireachtas Climate Action Committee (January 2022) and also compiled a briefing for TDs on Just Transition, within the same timeframe. Congress also made submissions on the development of the EU funded Just Transition Territorial Plan (February 2022).

We were also central to the launch of the Just Transition Alliance (March 2022), comprised of Congress, SIPTU, Fórsa, TASC, Friends of the Earth and Stop Climate Chaos (later joined by Global Action Plan). The Alliance published an agreed Joint Declaration that called for the establishment of a Just Transition Commission based on social dialogue, as a matter of urgency.¹

In May of 2022, both Congress and the Just Transition Alliance held separate meetings with Environment Minister, Eamon Ryan and key officials at which the case for Commission was made strongly. This call was reiterated in the Congress submission on the development of the 2023 Climate Action Plan (September 2022).

While the 2023 CAP contains more detail on the role and function of the Commission, it remains vague on timelines for set up and other key features and, at the time of writing, the Energy Sector Group was planning further engagement with government and key officials on this.

In addition, the Energy Sector Group and the Alliance has been developing closer links with Scottish energy unions and the Just Transition Partnership of which it is a key member to gain clearer insights into the operation of the Just Transition Commission in Scotland, which was established in 2019.

In addition, this has also led to outline agreement among key affiliates to develop more coherent and structured engagement across the sector, on a North-South all-island basis.

The Energy Sector Group is also engaging with unions in Denmark to learn from some of the pioneering work they have undertaken in relation to the offshore energy sector and the development of the skills required for the sector. At the time of writing, this work was ongoing.

¹ This call was also supported by wide range of environmental and civil society groupings.

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES

ROI HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Congress Health and Safety Committee (HSC) is reconstituted after every Congress Biennial Conference and following its reconstitution in 2021 the following were elected as officers of the Committee:

Chairperson:

Pat Kenny (CWU)

Vice-Chairperson:

Maeve Brehony (INMO)

Secretary:

Conor McDonald (ASTI)

The Committee works through sub-Committees and the following subcommittees were formed:

- Strategy
- Safety Representatives
- Mental Health
- Bullying
- Legislation
- Workers' Memorial Day

The Committee believed that the trade union movement should rededicate itself to the principles and values that saw the trade union movement take a leading role in Occupational Health & Safety (OSH) in the past. One of its first actions therefore was the preparation of a document which set out the movement's engagement with OSH.

Ireland continues to have significant and avoidable workplace fatalities

every year. In Ireland in the ten-year period between 2013 and 2022, 461 people were killed in work-related incidents and many thousands more were severely injured or made ill. In 2022 alone, 27 people were killed in work-related incidents.

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.

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 SHWW 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 advances made during Covid in relation to the 'Lead Worker Representative' still offer opportunities to strengthen the Safety Rep role and encourage more take up.

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 workrelated 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 undertaking 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



REPRESENTATION

Congress, through the HSC, has representation on a number of important bodies. The Board of the Health and Safety Authority is appointed every three years by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Employment and comprises representatives from employer and employees' organisations in addition to five nominees from the Minister. Board Members serve a three-year term. Congress is represented by David Hughes INMO, Michelle Quinn SIPTU and Deirdre McDonald ASTI.

The Advisory Committee for Safety & Health (ACSH) is a tripartite body based in Luxembourg which advises the European Commission on OSH matters and assists with the preparation, implementation and evaluation of activities in the field of safety and health. The Congress representative is Sylvester Cronin (SIPTU).

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (Bilbao) was set up to provide the Community bodies, the Member States and those involved in the field, with technical, scientific and economic information of use in the field of safety and health at work. The Congress representative is Dessie Robinson (Fórsa).

Frank Vaughan represented Congress on the Health & Safety Committee of the ETUC during this period.

ACTIVITIES

The HSC undertook a number of significant activities and projects during this period.

As well as the key event of Workers' Memorial Day in April 2022 and 2023, the Committee organised an online seminar on 21 October 2022 focusing on Musculoskeletal Disorders, the biggest single cause of injuries in the workplace, with contributions from speakers from ETUC, HSA and HSE.

We promoted the proposal from the ETUC on a Zero Deaths campaign theme for Workers' Memorial Day and have continued to lobby the DETE to seek support for this important campaign.

The Committee produced guidelines on Mental Health and Trade Unions and has been working with Patricia Murray from the HSA to engage in a pilot exercise with trade unions for use of the Work Positive tool

SUBMISSIONS

The HSC made a submission to:

 Public Consultation on HSA's Code of Practice for Indoor Air Quality



WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY 2022

The event was back to an in-person commemoration following on from the online events.

Congress worked with the HSA, IBEC and CIF to organise the event which took place in the Garden of Remembrance, Dublin. The event was attended by over 70 representatives of unions, employer organisations and others and was addressed by the Minister as well as Congress President Kevin Callinan and Sharon McGuinness of the HSA.

We were also honoured to have the family of Lorcan Deasy present. Tragically Lorcan lost his life as a result of a fall at work in 2018 and his brother spoke movingly about the impact his brother's death continues to have on the family. Speaking at the time, Lorcan's mother Marian said:

It's an honour to represent Lorcan and to honour the seven families who have lost someone so far this year, and we're not even at the end of the fourth month, 38 families who lost somebody last year and the 481 families affected in the last ten years.

Those are statistics but look outside the statistics, there's lives that are absolutely decimated and destroyed forever. Nothing will ever be the same again in our lives ever.

All you have to do is look on the health and safety website. Everything is there that they need. It's just to get the willingness of every single employer that the place that you are asking somebody to come and work in is a safe place for them.

Mrs Deasy led the placing of flowers in the commemorative pool to



International Workers' Memorial Day Commenoration 2022.

remember her son and to represent workers who had lost their lives in the previous year.

A video was produced and can be viewed at https://vimeo.com/ whitepineio/review/704304375/ e2a32bdd04



Media coverage of the event was extensive with a filmed report broadcast on all three daily news broadcasts by RTE (One o'clock, Six One News and 9 O'clock) and also on Virgin Media News.

There was also coverage in the Irish Times and Irish Independent among others, and extensive publicity on social media, with significant contributions from affiliated unions.

The ceremony was also used to launch and comment on the ETUC's Zero Death at Work campaign, and this is being pursued with the Minister and the HSA to see how this might be progressed.

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY 2023

The Health and Safety Committee took the lead in organising the event to mark Workers' Memorial Day 2023.

This took place once again in the Garden of Remembrance when Minister Neale Richmond joined Congress General Secretary Owen Reidy and others to lay a wreath in memory of all of those who have been killed, injured or made sick at or because of work.

There was support from the HSA, CIF, Ibec and NISO and the event was well attended by trade union representatives; music was supplied by the CWU band and Ethel Buckley, Deputy General Secretary of SIPTU and Executive Council member chaired the event as well as calling for a minute's silence.



Owen Reidy General Secretary Commemorating Workers' Memorial Day 28 April 2023



PUBLICATIONS

The Committee was involved along with the HSA in producing an updated Safety Representatives handbook. This was a substantial piece of work and it is envisaged that this will be a core text for Safety Representatives.

Published guidelines for Mental Health and Trade unions. The document encourages all unions to adopt the six principles set out and to introduce a range of specific measures in their support. It is hoped that a number of affiliated trade unions will work with the Health and Safety Committee to pilot the guidelines in their own organisations.

Conferences/Seminars

We participated in an ETUI Conference in October 2022 which looked at what measures could be put in place to reduce Psychosocial Risk (PSR) in workplaces.

We took part in the ETUI Annual OSH Conference in December 2022 which focussed on the theme 'Occupational safety & health lessons learned from the pandemic'.

We participated in the ETUI OSH Conference on Psycho Social Risks, 18 & 19 October 2022, the 8th ETUI Psychosocial Risks network meeting on 7 & 8 December 2022, and also attended a World Health Organisation EPI-WIN webinar on 'Emerging biological threats: what are they and why are they a risk' in December 2022.



Geraldine Alexander with Patricia King at LRA Conference 2022.



NI HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Health and Safety Officers

Chair

Geraldine Alexander, NIPSA

Vice Chair

Aidan McDonnell, Belfast and District Trades Council

The NI Health and Safety Committee continued to provide valuable feedback and insight into the many issues facing workers and trade unions.

Based on this feedback, Congress pressed 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 Together².

Workers' Memorial Day NI

Workers' Memorial Day was marked by an online social media campaign calling for a minute's silence at 11am on 28th April. The minute silence was widely observed and gained considerable traction on social media.

UK Covid Inquiry

Congress is participating as a Core Participant in the UK Covid Inquiry alongside the TUC, WTUC and STUC. The inquiry was established as an independent public inquiry set up to examine the UK's response to and the impact of Covid 19, and learn lessons for the future. Notwithstanding the Congress call for a specific Northern Ireland Covid Inquiry, the Secretariat together with the NIC ICTU and subcommittees worked on evidence to a number of the Inquiries modules. This included:

Module 1 opened on 21 July 2022 and was designated to look into the preparedness for the pandemic. Module 1 was intended to assess whether the pandemic was properly planned for and whether the UK was adequately ready for that eventuality. Through this module, the Inquiry sought to examine the whole system of civil emergencies including resourcing, risk management and pandemic readiness. It also scrutinised government decisionmaking relating to planning and seek to identify lessons that can be learnt.

Module 2c This module will look at, and make recommendations about, the decision-making by the government in Northern Ireland in relation to Covid 19 between early January 2020 until Covid 19 restrictions were lifted in Northern Ireland in March 2022. It will examine the decision-making of key groups and individuals within

² chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/sites/default/files/Covid 19-Working-Through-This-Together.pdf

the government in Northern Ireland including the First Minister, deputy First Minister and other Ministers, in particular between early January and late March 2020 when the first national lockdown was imposed. More detailed consideration of a number of key areas and the impact of the pandemic on those areas in Northern Ireland will be undertaken later in the Inquiry.

ROI RETIRED WORKERS' COMMITTEE



Retired Workers' Induction Handbook

The 2021-2023 ROI Retired Workers' Committee undertook a significant body of work over many months and meetings developing an induction handbook to assist future members of the Committee settle into their new role and to introduce them to the workings of the Committee and to Congress.

The Secretary, Margaret Browne, represented retired members at the Department of Social Protection Pre-Budget Forum in Dublin Castle in July 2022 which was attended by the Minister and her senior officials. In light of the surge in the cost-of-living, the Committee agreed that their budget priorities needed to be reviewed for

the following year. A review and rewrite were subsequently undertaken in preparation for the Pre-Budget Forum in summer 2023. The Committee wish to record their appreciation of Ann Walsh (AHCPS) and Pat Lamon (SIPTU) for leading on this piece of work.

2022 saw the return to in-person monthly meetings when the public health restrictions were lifted, almost two years after meetings had moved online. Our annual North/South seminars also returned to in-person events in September 2022, with the NI Committee hosting retired members from across the island for two days in Belfast.

In April 2023 the ROI Committee met for two days in Wexford. The seminar was, as always, well attended with speakers from Congress affiliated unions and other subject experts from outside organisations. The topics covered ranged from empowering older people to participate in climate action to knowing how to protect yourself against financial fraud, to the crisis in our emergency departments for patients and staff.

Pensions remained an area of focus for the Committee. There is serious concern that the real value of the contributory State Pension was not maintained in Budget 2022 and Budget 2023 and frustration at the continuing failure of government to deliver their commitment to benchmark and index the payment. The success of the Congress negotiators of the Public Service Pay Agreement in maintaining the principle of pay and pension parity between serving and retired public servants was warmly welcomed by

SECTION TWO

the Committee. As too was Congress' support of Deputy Brid Smith's (People Before Profit) private members bill – Industrial Relations (Provision in Respect of Pension Entitlements of Retired Workers) Bill 2021. The Committee also sent a letter of support to the Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament on a motion that was carried at the Parliament's 2022 Annual Meeting calling for the money taken from workers' pension funds during the financial crisis to be recovered.

The Committee want to record their appreciation of Ann Walsh (AHCPS) and Ann Walsh (Fórsa) for stepping in to provide secretarial support, Jimmy Whelan (Unite) for his chairmanship and Natalie Higgins (Congress General Secretary's Office) for her assistance over 2021–2023.

NI RETIRED WORKERS' COMMITTEE

The NI Retired Workers' Committee (NI RWC) continues to forge ahead with an ambitious agenda under the

chair of Margaret Galloway (PCS), and its vice-Chair Hugh Rafferty (Unite).

The NI Retired Workers' Committee (NI RWC) continued to meet online and held regular meetings after the initial lockdown hiatus. Many members of the RWC were shielding at home, but fortunately were able to connect with their family and friends online. Since the lockdown which commenced right after the Age Seminar held in Dublin on 20/21 February 2020, there have been regular online meetings of the committee, and these were used to plan and deliver a limited Age Webinar in February 2021, with a second Age Webinar delivered in autumn 2021.

A great supporter of the NI RWC is Eddie Lynch, the Commissioner for Older People NI, who briefed the committee regularly, and spoke online at a session on the rights of older people during the pandemic at the 2021 Age Seminar. Eddie took part in the Age Seminar held in



Retired Workers Committee Chairs Jimmy Whelan ROI and Margaret Galloway NI with Justin McCamphill. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline



Belfast in September 2022, the first such in-person event.

Another group which has a strong relationship is the UK-based National Pensioners' Convention. Its chair Jan Shortt participated in the 2022 Age Seminar, and joined Eddie Lynch in a session dedicated to the effect of Covid in care homes and for domiciliary care clients and workers. The session included members of unions representing care workers, GMB and Unison. Jan also travelled to Wexford for the 2023 Age Seminar which was also addressed by Owen Reidy and Gerry Murphy.

Members of the RWC are active in the retired sections of their own affiliates, and also with the All-Party Group on Ageing and Older People, which has continued to meet with stakeholders even with the NI Assembly in abeyance. Its Chair is Claire Sugden. Age NI hosted in 2021 a pensioners' parliament in the NI Assembly chamber and discussed pressing issues discussing pressing issues such as fuel poverty, age discrimination and services for older people.

Margaret Galloway remotely addressed the Congress BDC in 2021 as a guest speaker, and a motion from the Congress Executive Council on behalf of retired members was passed. The motion called for action in both jurisdictions to protect and improve the lives of older citizens, calling for a comprehensive, transparent and statutory inquiries into the responses to the pandemic in both NI and ROI.

The motion also called for stronger

legislation to be introduced "to secure the rights of older persons in Northern Ireland by being the last jurisdiction on these islands to pass a long-promised law outlawing age discrimination in the delivery of goods facilities and services", and "that laws in the Republic on age discrimination require the strong and independent regulation of an Older People's Commissioner, as pertains in Northern Ireland."

At the NIC BDC in Enniskillen, there were three motions passed supporting legislation to outlaw age discrimination.

CONGRESS YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Congress Youth Committee is a vital part of the work and organisation of Congress and continues to play an active role in trade union and progressive campaigning.

In February 2022, the Congress Youth Committee was reconstituted as an all-island committee, serviced by the Northern Ireland office of Congress. The committee has been active in addressing a variety of social and economic issues facing young people in Ireland. The committee meets monthly and is currently working on two campaigns against precarious, low-paid work and weak trade union legislation.

From February 2022 until January 2023 the Chair of the Committee was Lisa O'Donoghue (TUI). The current Chair of the Committee is Azzy O'Connor (Unite).

SECTION TWO

II. NORTHERN IRELAND

THE WORK OF THE NIC

This chapter 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 Alison Millar, whose two-year term as NIC Chair ended in 2022 with the NIC ICTU BDC in Enniskillen. The inperson conference saw the elevation of Paddy Mackel (UCU) to Chair, with Jacqui White (UTU) elected vice-Chair at the first meeting of the new NIC in December

The regular monthly meeting of the NIC since the lockdowns have been hybrid using Zoom with some members choosing to come to the Congress NI office in-person. We are grateful for those members who stepped down after their mandate ended on November 2022; Helena McSherry, Dooley Harte, Stephen Harvey and David Kennedy who retired in 2021.



Northern Ireland Committee Chair Paddy Mackel. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

^{*}Most of NI photos taken by Kevin Cooper/Photoline



CAMPAIGNING

WORKERS DEMAND BETTER

The period since the last Congress BDC can be characterised as one of inertia in government and turmoil in the workplaces of Northern Ireland. The winter of 21/22 saw a rising tide of unionist political opposition to the NI Protocol which culminated in the withdrawal of DUP ministers from the NI Executive in February 2022. The Congress view on the Protocol has been outlined in this report's section on The Economy - Brexit, but the immediate concern for unions was the damage to devolution, the peace settlement, and in particular the prospects of achieving through legislation the pledges on workers' rights agreed by all parties in the New Decade New Approach agreement, which were reiterated by leadership figures from all five parties on the NI Executive: DUP, Sinn Féin, Alliance, SDLP and UUP.

The withdrawal further undermined the public's confidence in devolution as many things which need to be done urgently, were not going to be completed. NI faced an election to the NI Assembly in May with no functioning devolved government, little prospect of one returning after the election and a government in Westminster ramping up belligerent rhetoric against Europe and using Northern Ireland as a political football in the internecine bickering which dominated the Tory party.

The chaos of the Johnson administration in its final months smothered any chance of serious government intervention to restore stability to Stormont. In the space of less than two months, there were three NI Secretaries of State, Brandon Lewis, Shailesh Vara and Chris Heaton-Harris, the latter appointed by Liz Truss during her 44-day tenure, now regarded as the Prime Minister who inflicted most damage in the shortest time to the UK economy.

It is the economic consequences of Truss and the 'mini-budget' she oversaw, alongside the longrunning weaknesses to state capacity caused by Brexit and the spike in global energy costs from Russia's imperialist attack on Ukraine, which have dominated the domestic sphere in 2022 and 2023. That is the background to the wave of industrial unrest across the UK, as the Conservatives decided to make working people take the brunt of these pressures and hold wages down while inflation soared to over 12%, levels unseen for half-a-century.

Across the economy public and private sector workers, many of whom were the very 'essential' workers who got us through the pandemic, did whatever they had to, to seek to protect their pay and earnings and maintain their families' living standards. When employers would negotiate, settlements were reached, often below the level of inflation, but at levels which those workers could accept. This did not happen with the public sector, where Tory ministers refused to recognise that the recommendations set by Pay

Review Bodies before the Ukraine crisis of around 2% were both outdated and outrageous as food inflation and other outgoings which disproportionately afflicted low-paid workers soared to over 15%.

NIC ICTU called for fairness and action. "Firstly, we need to see proper targeted state intervention directed at people on fixed incomes and to workers on low to medium incomes. We have been told there is nearly £0.5bn available to distribute if we had an Executive, this is a start, but we will require more."

"Secondly, we need to see a proper structured promotion of collective bargaining, this is workers and unions negotiating either at local level or sector level for decent and affordable pay increases. Only a combination of both actions can workers and citizens hope to stem the cost-of-living crisis."

Further, NIC ICTU called for a new NI Executive to be formed which could immediately legislate for commitments the five main parties agreed to in the New Decade New Approach agreement around workers' rights that would promote and facilitate more collective bargaining, unions and employers negotiating on productivity, change, modernisation and of course pay and conditions of employment.

That's why we hosted a demonstration at Stormont on 25 June to call for urgent action on the cost-of-living. As the months rolled on with no such action in the NI Assembly, NIC ICTU returned to Stormont in October and launched a new campaign at a room packed with legislators and trade union activists from both private and public sectors who had already taken industrial action, or were preparing to do so.



Rally at Stormont demanding action on cost-of-living. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline



The event was sponsored by SDLP MLA Matthew O'Toole and was addressed by political figures from all parties (bar the DUP). Owen Reidy said "emerging from Covid 19 workers and their families expected a new approach to work and rewarding those who work. An economy that included everyone and worked for everyone. Many of the workers who were lauded as 'essential' during Covid are now being treated with contempt and they have had enough and are not prepared to see their pay fall further behind, hence the unprecedented industrial action we will see across Northern Ireland in the coming period.

We intend to engage with workers and communities across Northern Ireland, lobby politicians both here and at Westminster, hold protests and rallies at strategic times and demand that we see stronger better workers' rights, where unions can collectively bargain with employers and demand a better social wage, such as better access to affordable childcare, transport and so on."

The Workers Demand Better campaign is ongoing and involves a range of initiatives and actions which forms the basis of a trade union movement led campaign which engages with workers, communities and other allies across NI and involves townhall-type meetings, rallies, workers' education, engagement with politicians and civil servants accompanied by a strong and clear media narrative. From the outset, the campaign is clearly about both public and private sector workers.

The **purpose** of such a campaign is to build and lead to a progressive movement that demands actions from government (both UK and devolved) to implement measures to tackle the cost-of-living crisis that is punitive and likely to get worse over the coming months.

Our **objective** is to influence the government(s) on specific policy matters and to demonstrate to workers and the wider community that there is an alternative to ordinary citizens having to pay for this crisis and becoming poorer, while profits of multinational energy providers continue to soar. This can be achieved by a range of measures including:

- Leading the demand, in the immediate term, for a more permanent interventionist state (similar to what we saw during the furlough period) that took actions to protect workers and communities during the Covid 19 global pandemic
- Developing government policy and legislative changes to create stronger and better collective bargaining arrangements where workers and unions can negotiate decent pay increases
- Making the demands outlined in 'No Going Back' the essential backdrop of our vision for the future
- Creating the conditions for a broader debate with other interested parties on the type of society which best meets the interests of workers and the wider community, rather than simply the interests of business and profit



MLAs from SF and UUP in support of Workers Demand Better campaign. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

 By successfully articulating and promoting the points above we can demonstrate to workers that the trade union movement has tangible and clear policies that can deliver for everyone

The NIC agreed the following set of actions to promote the demands:

- A media launch of the campaign in Stormont, with trade union activists and elected politicians, outlining clear actions and a narrative about the campaign including its purpose, our objective and what we intend to do
- Hold a series of 'townhall' meetings at specific locations around NI promoting the campaign and engaging directly with communities and workers.
 Speakers at these meetings should include 3/4 people per event and be composed of a senior member of the NIC, the AGS, a local trades council person and possibly

- another person either from the community or an ally/expert. The purpose of the meetings is to mobilise our base, engage with other workers and families and build our coalition. It is crucial that the narrative is clear and concise and consistent with other townhall meetings. In essence, we want to outline that:
- 1. There are practical solutions/ alleviations to the cost-of-living crisis
- 2. They include stronger collective bargaining (with decent pay increases) and a more interventionist state when it comes to what we call the social wage, i.e. the cost of childcare etc
- The trade union movement (through our paper 'No Going Back') have the policies that are necessary

- 4. It is important that people are organised in their union, their community and that they challenge all politicians on the prevailing orthodoxy that we can't have pay increases that chase inflation. We should reference in particular the work carried out by NERI on this issue
- 5. We should also have a clear specific ask of those in attendance. Something they can do that is meaningful and effective

Meetings commenced in late 2022 and are ongoing in 2023. The following locations are targeted: four specific Belfast locations north, south, east and west, Derry City, Omagh, Enniskillen, Craigavon/ Armagh, Newry, Lisburn, Bangor/ Newtownards and Ballymena (totalling 12 meetings).

We have commenced meeting the political party leaders in relation to the cost-of-living crisis in order to outline our proposals and seek support for same in any new devolved Programme for Government and also urgent early action to address the crisis.

We propose to meet with interested parties in Westminster who have an interest in NI. This could include the Shadow Secretary of State, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, other cross-party MPs and peers and the Treasury.



Justin McCamphill, Congress Vice President.

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.

The NIC has had regular and extensive engagement with political parties at Stormont on the issue of workers' rights, particularly post pandemic. As we emerge from the pandemic it is essential, we make work pay and that those workers who kept us safe and kept our

economy going get their proper respect and reward at work. Low pay is endemic and needs to be addressed. We have campaigned and received commitments from the five parties that the workers' rights commitments in New Decade New Approach must be legislated for. We have argued that a comprehensive ordinates the trade union side of the Collective Consultation Working Group (CCWG), which is a regular engagement forum with employers supervising the changes to, and impact on members of, public sector pensions.

Owen Reidy, Congress Assistant

and received commitments from the five parties that the workers' rights commitments in New Decade New Approach must be legislated for. We have argued that a comprehensive Employment Bill that promotes and supports collective bargaining both at the workplace and across sectors and that encompassed the best elements of the new EU Directive (the Adequate Minimum Wages Directive) is a centrepiece of any agreed Programme for Government when devolution returns. These issues were aired at meetings with the NIO Minister of State Steve Baker, and the

leader of the opposition, Labour Party

leader Keir Starmer.

Owen Reidy, Congress Assistant General Secretary Northern Ireland, was appointed by Minister Conor Murphy as a member of the Public Procurement Board in 2021. While there is currently only one trade union seat on the board, the NIC took the view that this was a strategic position which should be embraced and leveraged as much as possible in the interests of workers.

The LRA Employer Employee roundtable continues to meet. The purpose of the body is to bring together representatives of workers, the trade union movement and employers, including the CBI, Chambers and FSB, to discuss important employment related matters. Issues discussed during the period of this report include the post Covid 19 environment, workers' rights and unions were involved in the organisation of a major LRA employment/industrial relations conference held in February 2023. The chair of the roundtable has, with the agreement of the members, instigated a review of the roundtable and its functions in the context of its future. Separately, NIC ICTU coWe had two fundamental priorities when it came to the Procurement Board activity. Firstly, to ensure that public procurement would be used to improve pay and that at least the living wage as opposed to the legal minimum wage would be used in tenders. Secondly that we broaden out the term and concept of social value when it comes to scoring public procurement so that it included the Carnegie Trust seven key definitions as to what fair work is, including rights to collective bargaining. We have made good progress on this as the minimum rate of pay that can be paid under any public procurement is the living wage. Also the social value percentage for weighting a contract will go to 20% in 2023. The seven Carnegie Trust definitions are also a requirement, and this progress needs to be built on over the next few years.



NHS and Teachers Strike Rally Belfast 2023. Credit: Brendan Harkin

SUPPORTING INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The period since the passing of hopefully the worst part of the pandemic has seen an unprecedented wave of industrial agitation. A combination of a stalled economy after Covid lockdowns and the energy shock as a consequence of Putin's invasion of Ukraine has disrupted the global economy, in particular with soaring energy inflation.

The situation in Northern Ireland was compounded by the refusal of the DUP to re-establish the Stormont institutions after the May election to the NI Assembly. Unions responded by marching to Parliament Buildings to demonstrate for a return to work by MLAs, in order to assist working families with the financial crisis unfolding. Not that all decisions from NI executive ministers were wise.

NIC ICTU supported Unite in its campaign against the proposed abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board by the Minister for Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Edwin Poots. NIC ICTU also gave practical support to the RMT after the shocking treatment of their workers by the owners of P&O Ferries. NIC ICTU and all unions were supportive of the Unite staff of the Regina Coeli Women's Hostel in west Belfast, including arranging a meeting with the Communities Minister Deirdre Harding.

In the absence of political help from Stormont or Westminster, many workplaces and sectors decided they could not wait for a pay rise in line with inflation, and balloted for industrial action, up to and including strike action. There have been so many examples since Autumn 2021, and almost every union has either taken action or is in the process

of doing so at the time of going to press. The list of unions and workplaces in dispute below is not exhaustive, but it gives a flavour of the mood among workers that they will not be taken for granted or patronised.

The UCU dispute with the universities over pensions, pay and contracts has continued, and UCU joined with NASUWT in disputes with the Further Education Colleges. NASUWT, INTO, UTU and NAHT were in dispute with the school employers, and every other teaching affiliate has balloted members for industrial action, with ASOS commencing in December 2022 and a major halfday strike closed most schools in February 2023. Unite members took

strike action against the Education Authority and Queen's University, and in a series of private sector disputes won real pay gains for workers in manufacturing, food production and services. USDAW took action against Coca-Cola, and with Wincanton, a supplier to that drinks firm. CWU took action against BT, then BT Openreach, then Royal Mail and then the Post Office, hosting a large strike rally at Belfast City Hall.

Unite and BFAWU took action against Hovis and Premier Foods. NIPSA crèche workers took action against Queen's University and NIPSA civil servants took action for better pay. PCS members balloted members in the Passport and Borders Service. The FBU has threatened action if the



AGS Gerry Murphy points out why teachers and NHS workers were on strike in February. Credit: Brendan Harkin

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Home Office carried out its threat to disband its collective agreement and pay structure, and the threat was removed after a successful strike ballot. BBC staff voted for strike action against cuts to regional services, including a major reduction of Radio Foyle's services. NUJ journalists won improved pay after taking strike action at the Reach newspaper chain, which includes The Mirror.

NIPSA Education Welfare Officers went on strike and threats of strike action from Unite and GMB won

better pay agreements at several companies including Harland & Wolff, Palace Foods, Burke shipping, Foyle Port, Moy Park, 4 Seasons and Spirit Aeronautics. GMB were also involved in a dispute with Court Care Homes, and ballots were instigated at Hermes Delivery, DHL and G4S Cash Solutions. Unite won pay rises at Translink but a dispute at Caterpillar dragged on. There was strike action taken at several District Councils which resulted in positive outcomes. Other public services affected by strikes were Road Service NI, the NI Civil Service and HM Revenue & Customs.



Alison Millar at Cost of Living Rally. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

At the time of this report going to press, several unions across all sectors were taking further industrial action, in particular the health service. Unison and NIPSA began a series of actions short of strike and one-day strikes, as did teaching unions, working together in a day of co-ordinated strikes and rallies in February 2023.

Finally, a special mention of Unite's members in the NI Housing Executive who marked 26 weeks of strike action for fairer pay in February 2023. In one of his first engagements as Congress Assistant General Secretary, Gerry

Murphy criticised the NI Housing Executive on its failure to extend a fair pay increase and end the strike and the impact it was having on social housing tenants. Gerry met the striking Unite members and officials to discuss how the wider trade union movement can support these principled workers and their strong (and long) fight for pay justice.

NIC ICTU have been working with friends in GB to oppose the Strikes (Minimum Services) Bill presently at Westminster, and lobbied all of Northern Ireland's MPs and Peers (from all parties and none). Part



Regina Coeli workers address the press. Credit: John O'Farrell



of this was a detailed briefing on the background and impact of the legislation on workers' rights in England, Wales and Scotland, and even though employment law is devolved to the NI Assembly, we would be concerned about its impact here, especially if the suspension of Stormont continues.

The Bill is a deeply authoritarian attack on workers' rights, as demonstrated in this summary:

- Does not align GB with ILO standards or other comparable European countries
- Does not ensure public safety during strikes; such laws and practices already happen
- Hands power to Westminster ministers, not Parliament (or the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales), to write the rules, using a 'Henry VIII clause"
- Has been railroaded through parliament, without proper consultation or scrutiny
- HM government has refused to publish an impact assessment
- Those who fail to comply with the work order lose unfair dismissal protection. They will be forced into work despite having democratically and legally voted to strike
- For the first time since the second world war, Parliament is being asked to authorise the requisitioning of workers

The spectre of direct rule is very real, as legislation such as this Bill, the Retained EU Law Bill and the Bill which outlaws the right to seek political asylum in the UK, are regular examples of a ruling party in Westminster who have contempt for Britain's democratic norms and whose Brexit obsession has fomented division across society and damage to our economy.

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. It lobbies policy makers, as well as the public when it authored and circulated a digital leaflet outlining the scale of proposed cuts to the education budget in early 2023. The ETUG was a useful hub of information across 12 unions, both in outlining the effects of budget cuts and co-ordinating support for unions taking industrial action, including the teachers' strike on 21 February 2023, on the same day as NHS strikes, which saw thousands attend strike rallies in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Omagh, Newry, Bangor, Coleraine and Ballymena.

There was a series of engagements with the Education Minister, her officials 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

the March 2021 BDC.

in parallel with union representatives on the existing bargaining structures with DENI and the Education Authority. For example, education unions developed in their sector an appreciation and understanding of Long Covid, after a resolution from

Sadly, the pro-active engagement between the ETUG and MLAs in Stormont was truncated by the withdrawal of DUP ministers from the NI Executive (including the Education Minister) at the start of 2022. ETUG members briefed some political parties on policy priorities during the NI Assembly election on May, and despite the effective suspension of the NI Assembly, there is a suite of education issues ready for the attention of Stormont when it is revived, hopefully soon, as some legislation passed before the end of the last mandate was genuinely progressive.

There was legislation on reforming FETO, the regulations exempting schools from many important parts of equality legislation. ETUG also lobbied in support of a Private Members Bill promoting integrated education, reiterating the long-held support for and education system which is secular and pluralist.

"As trade unions we believe that division in Northern Ireland cannot be laid at the door of education, and faith schools are a feature of education systems in many parts of the world including our nearest neighbours. Indeed, every school in Northern Ireland including integrated schools is a faith school.

"However, we cannot be blind to the fact that this is a post conflict society and there is an onus on us to craft structures which break down division. Part of the crafting is our political structures but so too is how we craft our education system. Northern Ireland needs all ability integrated education.

"The ICTU also support the forthcoming private members bill on removing article 71 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order to allow teachers to have the same protections in law as other workers.

"The ICTU are mindful of Mr Justice Treacy's ruling that integrated education is a 'standalone concept'. That is: 'that it cannot be argued that shared projects or mixed schools with a 'partisan board' or denominational ethos, are the same thing.' Therefore, the ICTU are clear that in supporting this Bill that we are arguing for a particular form of education.

"The ICTU support the expansion of 'integrated education' in clause 1 to include those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not; and those of different abilities as well as reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children as per the current definition."

The ETUG were also invited by some political parties to share ideas on education ahead of the NI Assembly election. This allowed discussion

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on issues such as those mentioned above, our opposition to academic selection at 11, and other initiatives such as Free School Meals for every child, a UK-wide campaign led by Unison, and a long-standing Congress policy.

NI HEALTH COMMITTEE

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.

Health unions were represented by NIC ICTU's representative 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.

Significant changes have been made to the bodies established with regards to the transformation programme across health. The Transformation Advisory Board (TAB) has been stood down and replaced by a new Improvement and Transformation Advisory Board (ITAB). The Management Board for Rebuilding

HSC services created during the pandemic has been replaced by a new Performance and Transformation Executive Board. These new structures have been established without consultation being undertaken with trade unions and the Committee is concerned by the terms of reference for ITAB, on which we have been invited to participate. On this basis we are reserving our position on participation going forwards whilst seeking that these issues be addressed.

The Health Committee's Chair Anne Speed (Unison) and Vice-Chair Claire Ronald (CSP) continued with the support of over 12 affiliated unions representing workers across the Health and Social Care sector. Throughout the Covid health emergency and as the situation seemed to improve, 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.

In particular, affiliate unions representing allied health professionals were concerned about the lack of implementation of recommendations made within workforce reviews conducted within these areas. A lack of investment in training and recruitment of specialist staff was a major area of concern. Within midwifery, there were concerns there was no sense of what the optimum midwifery and maternity support workforce should be both now and in the future.

A review process was also underway in relation to the social work care workforce and had to be incorporated into the implementation of the post-2019 dispute framework agreement on safe staffing.

Bargaining structures advised NIC ICTU of their interventions on workforce vacancies and the burden of agency staffing costs.

These intensified as the cost-of-living crisis impacted on the already suppressed wages of workers at all levels of the NHS. Faced with an intransigent Tory government and no NI Health minister of Assembly scrutiny committee to lobby and negotiate, health unions balloted members for industrial action, receiving large mandates for action short of strike action, and full strikes. Notably, these ballots were being passed in unions with little or no history of taking industrial action at all, let alone strikes.

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. Health unions have highlighted the detrimental impact that such substantial health inequalities have on the operation of the HSC system in terms of significantly higher hospital admissions from the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived.

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 wellbeing 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. This is another reason why unions took every opportunity to call for the restoration of devolved powers to the NI Executive, the NI Assembly and especially its statutory committees.

An example of how the NI Assembly and its Health committee benefitted the working lives of NHS staff was the successful passage of a Private Members Bill on car parking charges in hospital grounds. In December 2021, members of the NIC ICTU Health committee were invited to make a written submission and oral evidence to the Assembly Health Committee.

All health unions supported the submission which argued, among other points, that "hospital car parking fees are a stealth tax on the sick and an additional tax on NHS staff."

Another health issue raised with politicians by health unions was abortion services, both their availability to patients across all trusts, and the safety of staff and services users. Concerns were raised by local



trade unionists about interference at clinics in Belfast and Newry. The Health and Womens' Committees worked together with Alliance for Choice and the NI Human Rights Committee to gather accurate information and advocate solutions which protects the rights of women to access legal health services, the rights of health professionals to deliver a safe service, and respects the right of free expression (without harassment) to people who object to abortion.

The Health Committee supported the successful Private Members Bill on safe zones around health premises ensuring service users had safe access without intimidation.

MAY DAY

2022 saw the first May Day parade on the streets of Belfast since the onset of Covid 19. The rally was addressed by Congress President Kevin Callinan. An even larger march and rally was hosted in 2023, with the largest May Day gathering on the island of Ireland a fixture of the cultural calendar of Belfast.

ALL-ISLAND AND EAST-WEST ENGAGEMENT

THE NORTH/SOUTH COMMITTEE

Early in 2023, Congress relaunched the North/South committee with new membership. The members are from both the Executive Council and the NI committee:

J Boyle (INTO), K Callinan (Fórsa), J Cunningham (SIPTU), D Kennedy (CWU UK), P Mackel (UCU), T Trainor (Unite), P Mackel (UCU), C Gates (NIPSA), P McKeown (UNISON), G Murphy (INTO), P Ní Shéaghdha (INMO), J Pollock (Unite), E Ronayne (Fórsa), A Speed (UNISON), J Patrick Clayton (UNISON), J McCamphill (NASUWT), D Walker (GMB).

There is much work to do post Covid 19 and with the challenges to the NI political institutions and the cost-of-living issues. The committee intends to work on a seminar to mark 25 years of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, to look at motions 3 and 7 from BDC 2021 and to feed into the work of Congress participation in the LEEF Shared Island Sub-Committee where we are represented by Owen Reidy, General Secretary, Gerry Murphy, Assistant General Secretary NI, and Kevin Callinan, President. The committee will meet four times a year.



Each year the leadership of the four trade union federations across Britain and Ireland meet to discuss and debate the trade union issues of the day and to share our analysis of major strategic issues facing unions.

Last year's Council of the Isles was hosted by the TUC and took place May 2022 in London. Congress was represented by Patricia King, General Secretary, Kevin Callinan, Congress President, and Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary NI. Issues discussed included the Protocol and its impact on the political situation in Northern Ireland, trade union renewal, the EU Adequate Minimum Wages Directive, social partnership in Wales and campaigning techniques.



III. EQUALITY, SOCIAL POLICY AND LABOUR MARKET

LABOUR MARKET

LABOUR MARKET ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Labour Market Advisory Council (LMAC), which advises the government on labour market issues, met on five occasions over this period. Congress, the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, and the National Youth Council of Ireland (since 2022) each have one place on the Council. Ibec has five and there are three ex-**Department of Social Protection** (DSP), ESRI and OECD officials, the last of whom chairs. There are also six ex-officio members. representing the Departments of the Taoiseach, Social **Protection, Enterprise, Trade** and Employment, and Public **Expenditure and Reform. DSP** provides the secretariat.

The LMAC produced a report on implementation the government's *Pathways to Work 2021-2025* strategy, covering the period June 2021-June 2022 in December 2022. Congress ensured that the report states that there needs to be a focus on the quality of employment, in line with Ireland's commitments under

the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The LMAC has been working since early 2023 on contributing to the government's planned mid-term review of Pathways to Work in 2023.

Congress is also represented on the LMAC sub-group which comments on the evaluation of public employment schemes. In February 2022, Congress organised a meeting for affiliated unions with OECD and European Commission officials evaluating the Community Employment Scheme.

A separate employers' relations sub-group, made up of employers, was tasked by government with developing a strategy by June 2022 on improving engagement by employers with the public employment service, but at the time of writing has still to do so.

SOCIAL POLICY

Pandemic Payments

Having played a central role in the development of the emergency income supports for workers affected by the pandemic – the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), the Wage Subsidy Schemes and the Enhanced Illness Benefit – Congress battled hard to ensure that when and how they were withdrawn was based on concrete evidence and not



baseless claims by some business lobby groups that their labour shortages (in low-wage precarious jobs) were the result of workers' unwillingness to return to work when the economy started to reopen.

Newly released figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show that without these emergency income supports the 2021 at risk of poverty rate would have been 19.9%, more than eight percentage points higher than the 11.6% rate.

Following sustained petitioning of government, Congress won agreement to amend the Redundancy Payments Act to protect the redundancy entitlements of workers laid-off due to the pandemic.

The 1967 Act did not provide for the inclusion of periods of lay-off from work as reckonable for service purposes. Without reform, workers laid-off due to the public health restrictions could lose out on up to two years' / €2,400 tax-free redundancy pay. The Redundancy Payments (Amendment) Act 2022 ensures that workers made redundant are not out of pocket for periods of lay-off between March 2020-January 2022.

Under the social partner LEEF, Congress got government to agree to a €1,000 tax-free payment for frontline workers in recognition of their role during the pandemic, in line with what was happening in other countries.



SOCIAL WAGE

In May 2022 and March 2023, Congress published two policy position papers comparing the social wage in Ireland and the EU. The social wage is a measure of how much better off people are from social spending by government on income supports and public services. We showed the social wage for full-time workers in Ireland is exceptionally low by EU standards.

In the first report we demonstrated how workers in Ireland earning above a very modest full-time wage must pay market prices for essential services like housing, healthcare and childcare, driving up their cost-of-living. Whereas workers across the EU can access publicly funded services at little or no out-of-pocket cost, irrespective of the size of their pay packet or household income.

In the second report we showed how, despite paying pay-related social insurance contributions when in employment, workers in Ireland only receive a flat weekly payment (typically €220 a week) if they lose their job, fall sick or have a baby. Whereas in almost all other

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27 Member States, workers receive pay-related benefits to protect their normal living standards during short gaps in employment.

As a result, some measures were introduced in Budget 2023 to reduce out-of-pocket costs for working families on childcare, education, transport, and healthcare costs, and it was agreed that the social partner LEEF would work on delivering further improvements to workers' social wage.

Sick Pay

A new workers' right to sick pay became law from 1 January 2023. This followed our 'Make Sick Pay Mandatory' campaign, which had won cross-party support and widespread public support.

The Sick Leave Act 2022 guarantees workers a minimum 10 paid sick days a year from 2026 at 70% of their daily rate of gross pay, up to a maximum payment cap of €110 a day / €550 a week.

It benefited half of the workforce, over one million private sector workers, not covered for paid sick leave in their terms and conditions, and brings Irish employment law in line with the rest of Europe.

Pensions

Congress welcomed the government commitment not to raise the State Pension age. Our work continues towards delivering a Europeanstyle flexible qualifying pension age that will allow workers who started work at a young

age to qualify for a full State Pension before age 66 and to end the forced retirement of workers who want to keep working beyond the retirement age in their employment contract.

Congress welcomes the ongoing progress delivering a new workers' right to an occupational pension. We are pleased that many of the concerns we highlighted have been addressed in the draft Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings Scheme Bill 2022. Our work continues to ensure that auto-enrolment is fit for purpose for un-pensioned workers and does not have unintended consequences for workers already saving for retirement in existing collectively bargained workplace pensions.

REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING

Following a campaign by Congress in 2020, government committed to legislate for a new workers' right to request remote work. However, when the draft Right to Request Remote Working Bill was finally published in January 2022 it was immediately clear to us that it was not fit for purpose. A high-profile 'Make Remote Work!' campaign was launched in response by a Congressled cross-union working group.



UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

As a result, Congress was invited to enter into engagement (under the social partner LEEF) with the Department of Employment to resolve the flaws and gaps in the proposed legislation.

As recommended by Congress and approved by Cabinet, the draft bill was scrapped and the new statutory right to request remote working was included in the Work Life Balance Bill, which was already making its way through the Oireachtas. The Bill passed both houses and was signed in law by the President in April 2023.

Congress also won a commitment, written in to the Act, that after two years in operation consideration will be given to extending the workers' right to all types of flexible working arrangement.

New Public Holiday

Under the social partner LEEF, Congress got the government to agree to a new annual public holiday, St Brigid's Day, in recognition of the efforts of workers during the pandemic. To bolster our case, that the day of recognition should not be just a once-off, we highlighted how the number of national public holidays in Ireland (9 days) was below the EU average (12 days), and that our public holiday gap widens when regional and municipal days are included.



CONGRESS AND THE EU AT 50

To mark the 50th anniversary of Ireland joining the European Union, Congress edited and published a collection of essays from current and former senior trade union officials on the impact of EU membership for workers' rights in Ireland over the last half century.

ROI 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

As we emerged from Covid 19, the Women's Committee returned to organising live events including our Women's Conference in September 2022 in the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle. Entitled 'shaping the future of work', the conference heard from Congress Vice President, Phil Ní Shéaghdha and paid tribute to Congress General Secretary, Patricia King, who had just announced her departure.

There were a range of guest speakers, including outgoing ITUC General Secretary, Sharan Burrow, and Leader of the Labour Party, Ivana Bacik. 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.

In March 2023 a joint seminar was held in the Fairways Hotel in Dundalk under the broad theme of Women Demanding a Better Deal. The seminar heard from General Secretary Owen Reidy on his priorities for the movement into the future as well as Assistant General Secretary, Gerry Murphy. Speakers on organising, business and human rights, the experience of Roma in the labour market, gender and climate action, violence and harassment in the world of work as well as sessions on women's struggles in Iran, Afghanistan and Palestine ensured a packed and lively couple of days.

Women and Leadership

Building on motions to the 2020 ICTU Women's Conference, Leadership sessions continued to be held with consultant, Isobel Butler. They continued to attract excellent feedback and we plan to run them on a regular basis as long as demand holds firm.

International Women's Day

The day was marked in 2022 with a webinar entitled: "How do we tackle male violence against women and girls in work and in society?".

Noting that trade unions have been campaigning to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls for many years, from the effects of domestic and sexual violence to the scourge of sexual harassment and dealing with online and digital harassment. The ILO Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work is a new International Standard which trade unions can use to negotiate effective remedies and workplace policies.

The webinar examined practical ways trade unions can use the convention and heard how unions are developing policies to support victims of domestic abuse as well as supporting members who have experienced sexual harassment.

Keynote speakers included:

- Patricia King, Congress General Secretary
- Congress Women's Committee Joint Chairs Geraldine Alexander and Margaret Coughlan



- Marieke Koning, International Trade Union Confederation
- Mandy La Combre and Eileen Gorman, Financial Services Union
- Carol Scheffer, Communications Workers' Union
- Maxine Murphy Higgins, NASUWT

The General Secretary also spoke at the NWCI rally held in Dublin and Congress participated in an event at Áras an Uachtáráin to mark international women's day and contributed on domestic violence and the workplace.

2023 was marked by a statement in advance of our seminar sending greetings to women workers and calling for action to be taken to prioritise equality, inclusion, peace, and democracy.

We expressed abhorrence of recent attacks on places of refuge for asylum seekers in both jurisdictions on this island, and reports that women asylum seekers are reluctant to report domestic abuse or violence in case they are reported to the immigration and border authorities and pledged to stand with all seeking a better life here.

Women's Council of the Isles

The Women's Committee participated in the Women's Council of the Isles in Edinburgh in 2022 and maintained regular contact with our sister committees across the UK.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Congress joined with unions around the world in supporting the 2021 international day for the elimination of violence against women and the 16 Days of Action up to International Human Rights Day on 10 December - calling on governments to guarantee a world of work free from gender-based violence and harassment.

This right is enshrined in ILO Convention 190 (C190) and Recommendation 206 (R206). The ratification and implementation of C190 and its effective implementation, including R206, are crucial to eliminate gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work.

We urged that the Tánaiste's pledge to ratify Convention 190 before the end of 2022 is upheld and once again called upon him to finally bring this to fruition. We were part of a joint webinar with unions across the UK "Preventing & Tackling Sexual Harassment at Work" which conveyed a strong "Silence is compliance" message.

We also joined with the ETUC in calling for protection of victims of revenge porn and other forms of online sexual harassment at work as part of the EU directive on combating violence against women.

Male trade union leaders also made short videos for social media pledging never to condone or tolerate violence against women in our unions or workplaces.

Women's Committee ROI

The Women's Committee officers for the period were:

- Margaret Coughlan (Fórsa) Chair;
- Ann Ryan (SIPTU) Vice Chair;
- Moira Leydon (ASTI) Secretary

The Committee continued to meet on a regular basis and to work closely with our colleagues in Northern Ireland. As we emerged from COVID 19 physical meetings returned and most are now hybrid in nature. Our topics included a wide range of issues of interest to working women including the gendered impact of

the crisis, including: flexible working and working from home; increased risks for women in prostitution; leadership initiative, the menopause and violence against women.

As well as the joint work covered elsewhere in this report, we were involved in a range of issues and activities briefly described below.

Stop the Stigma - The menopause has been a serious issue for the Committee, building on surveys in some affiliates. Fórsa for example found that:

 1 in 4 respondents have been diagnosed with a specific condition resulting in severe medical symptoms during menstruation, like heavy bleeding, migraines, and nausea



Women's Committee visit the Mansion House May 2022.



- Over 70% of respondents had to take time off work as a direct result of their periods
- Only 1% of workplaces currently have a menstrual welfare policy in place
- 65% of respondents did not feel comfortable telling line managers about their difficulties at work

The prevalence of diagnosis with a severe condition and the need to take sick leave from work during menstruation and menopause confirmed for us that addressing this in the workplace was an imperative, both as a negotiating agenda and as a public awareness campaign.

We were proud to join the 'Stop the Stigma' campaign with affiliate unions. 'Stop the Stigma' recognises the importance of providing a supportive and inclusive work environment for all employees, including those who experience periods and menopause.

We also supported the Department of Health nationwide information campaign to inform and educate everyone about menopause, breaking the taboo associated with this part of the natural ageing process. The campaign was created in response to Irish women in menopause saying they feel unsupported and ignored, with less than one in five women describing it as a positive experience.

We also supported the **Better** Maternity Care campaign to allow for partner access at the birth and antenatal appointments and supported the protest in October 2021.

The Committee noted reports of some employers introducing some days leave for employees who have had a miscarriage and supported the Organisation of Working Time (Reproductive Health Leave) Act 2021 in the name of then Senator Ivana Bacik. The genesis of this Bill was the work the INTO Equality Committee carried out among members that lead to suggestions that as employers, unions should provide paid leave for miscarriage and reproductive health related matters as per the Bill.

We continued to ensure a focus on women in Afghanistan and supported a webinar in June 2022 Protecting the right of girls in Afghanistan to education, organised by UNITE the Union.

Our Chairperson, Margaret Coughlan, did us proud at the BDC in October 2021 by presenting on our work to delegates in Belfast.

We kept abreast of Gender Pay Gap developments, supporting Congress in influencing the Gender Pay Gap Information Act and subsequent European developments in pay transparency and encouraged our unions to actively participate in the Congress IHREC supported project on building the capacity of unions in gender pay gap reporting.

We ensured a great trade union presence at the National Women's **Council** March for international women's day 2022 at 12pm outside the Dáil in Dublin to mark International Women's Day by demanding action on the critical

issues women face, to ensure #NoWomanIsLeftBehind. And were proud of the address to the crowd by our **General Secretary, Patricia King**. We wish Patricia well in her life after Congress and thanks her for her immense contribution and support for the work of the Women's Committee.

It was our great honour and privilege to be hosted by our former member the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alison Gilliland, for our May 2022 meeting at the Mansion House.

A **Women in Leadership** course was held in June 2022.

Our Secretary, Moira Leydon presented on our work at the **STUC Women's Conference** in September 2022.

We are big supporters of SIPTU's Big Start campaign and congratulated them on the first **Early Years pay deal** setting minimum wages in the sector in September 2022. We also encouraged Families to access the National Childcare Scheme as minimum universal subsidy increases from 2 January 2023. We had a great presence at the **IHREC Conference** in November 2022 - Achieving Gender Equality At Work: Care Policy and Practice, in Croke Park.

We were delighted with the election of **Esther Lynch** as ETUC General Secretary in December 2022 and wish her well in leading the trade union movement in Europe.

We celebrated the ratification of ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work and

the introduction of 5 days paid leave for victims of domestic violence in the Work Life Balance Bill.

So, much to celebrate in terms of positive developments for women workers and much more to achieve!



Joint Women's Conference Dundalk March 2023.

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 and included:

Congress has engaged with Minister O'Gorman and officials in DCEDIY, IHREC, the Oireachtas on domestic legislative issues and MEPs on EU related matters during the period in order to advance our broad equality agenda.



We continued our participation in National Strategy for Women and Girls meetings chaired by Minister O'Gorman. It was 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. Congress participated in the evaluation of the strategy and we await with interest opportunities to participate in the successor strategy development and implementation.

Congress engaged in a presentation and discussion with the Oireachtas Committee on Gender Equality in September 2022

Press release on Work Life Balance Bill, including announcement of 5 days paid leave for victims of domestic violence.

We made a submission to DETE on the ratification of ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

Congress participated in meeting of Oireachtas Committee on Children Disability Equality Integration and Youth regarding Sinn Féin Domestic Violence Leave Bill.

We met with Sinn Féin regarding their pay transparency Bill and followed up with a letter to Minister O'Gorman on the matter. We welcomed his openness to such legislation and his commitment to examine the possibility of introducing such a measure in the context of the review of equality legislation and in the transposition of the proposed EU Pay Transparency Directive. Currently

the proposed directive article 5 only requires employers to provide information on pay to prospective employees in advance of interview. While welcome, this is of course not as effective as a requirement to publish.

Congress made a presentation to the Autism Committee in the Oireachtas.

Congress attended the Oireachtas Gender Equality Committee session to look at recommendations of Citizen's Assembly, including the right to collective bargaining.

We welcomed the launch of the third national strategy on DSGBV- Zero Tolerance - marks a key milestone in the struggle to ensure women's equality – something that will not be achieved until we end male violence against women. Congress will continue to play its role both nationally and internationally to support the achievement of the goal of Zero Tolerance of Domestic, Gender, and Sexual based violence.

At the end of 2021 we convened of group from affiliates to work on the Congress submission to review of the Equality Acts and subsequently participated in an IHREC advisory committee on the review.

We attended meetings with MEP Frances Fitzgerald and the ETUC re the proposed EU Pay Transparency Directive.



SIPTU Big Start Early Years Campaign.

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 and an ERO coming into effect on 15th September 2022, the first ever such deal in the sector.

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 the fact that Ireland, despite significant government investment in recent years, spends just 0.2% of GDP 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

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> fees in the European Union while ECEC professionals are some of the lowest paid in the economy. Our call to government was 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. This work was completed in advance of Budget 2022 when €172m was announced on a new core funding scheme to support the ERO and help reduce costs for parents. This was built upon in Budget 2023 bringing State investment in early learning and childcare to more than €1 billion. Parents using full time early learning and childcare services will see an average reduction of 25% in their out of pocket costs under Budget 2023 measures.

GENDER PAY GAP

Gender Pay Gap reporting finally became law in 2022 with the passing and enactment of the Gender Pay Gap Information Act. The Act amends 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



Launch of Gender Pay Gap Toolkit Sept 2022, K Callinan, President, J Pillinger, Min R O'Gorman, D Joyce.

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 convened a working group on the gender pay gap in light of the two processes towards legislation on pay transparency. A successful 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.

Training was held in early 2022 for participants from affiliate unions and a guide was published in September 2022 which was launched by Minister O'Gorman and Congress President, Kevin Callinan.

Author Jane Pillinger also attended and the guide has been widely disseminated and is a useful resource for affiliates in participating in the process in their sectors. The first round of reporting is now complete but without a central repository for reports it is difficult to get an accurate picture of the results. A PWC report reveals a mean gender pay gap of 12.6% across the organisations that published reports in December 2022. This compares to the most recently available data on Ireland's national pay gap of 11.3% (2019) and an EU average gender pay gap of 13% (2020).

An EU Pay Transparency Directive has now been agreed and transposition will require some changes to our own Gender Pay Gap Information Act.

It is hoped that this will also deal with one of the main concerns with our own legislation - the requirement to publish a statement setting out, "in the employers' opinion", the reasons for the gender pay gap in their company and what measures are being taken or proposed to be taken by the employer to eliminate or reduce that pay gap. This is not sufficient employers must discuss the gap with workers and their representatives and agree on a joint approach to tackling any gaps identified in an effective manner.

Transposition of the Work Life Balance Directive and DSGBV Leave

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 four months of parental leave, from which two months are nontransferable 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 covered elsewhere in this report.

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The Work Life Balance Bill became the vehicle for transposition and Congress had some considerable engagement with the political system regarding that Bill and covered in some detail in this report.

Additionally, Minister O'Gorman has added a statutory right to domestic violence leave to the Bill.

Following a Bill brought forward by Louise O'Reilly TD, Sinn Féin, Minister O'Gorman 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. Domestic violence has a significant impact - directly and indirectly - on work attendance and productivity. A 2014 Congress survey found that domestic violence doesn't just shatter the home lives of victims and families; it also impacts hugely on the workplace affecting the health, safety and performance of victims and work colleagues.

Women living with or escaping from domestic abuse may have a number of urgent and important matters to attend related to the abuse they experience. These include: medical visits, attending and preparing for a number of criminal and civil legal proceedings, counselling for themselves or their children, looking for a new home, relocating, changing children's school, and visiting specialist domestic violence services.

Workplaces can be an important source of support to a worker who is struggling with a difficult situation. Clear workplace polices and a range of supports, including paid leave and safety planning, can help employers fulfil their workplace safety obligations and manage risk.

Article 18 of the ILO Recommendation Number 206 accompanying the Convention 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 and we used this on our engagements.

Congress engaged with organisations working in the sector to ensure early ratification of ILO Convention 190 in January 2023 and in order to influence the Bill in this regard. The Bill was finally passed in March 2023 and includes an entitlement to 5 days domestic violence leave with the issue of pay to be determined by the Minister in regulations to be published. The Minister shall have regard to "the views of employer representative bodies and trade unions" in doing so.

Historically, domestic violence was relegated as a "private" issue, with no connection to work. ILO Convention 190 and the passing of this Act in ROI are now an acknowledgment of domestic violence having real consequences for workers, enterprises and society at large and we can be proud of our role in this historic development.





Joint Women's Conference Newcastle 2022. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

Congress has also done some training with Women's Aid on workplaces being supportive environments for victims of domestic violence, in developing a workplace policy which will also serve as a template for other workplaces and for use in collective bargaining on the matter.

ROI DISABILITY ISSUES

Congress work in this area is guided by our Disability Committee, chaired by Michelle Quinn. Members promote the use of our relaunched Reasonable Accommodation Passport Scheme which was profiled in an Employers for Change Seminar in summer 2022.

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, 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 a submission to DCEDIY on the Draft Initial State Report under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

A submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Autism was followed up by a discussion with the Committee in December 2022. The Committee is developing a guide for unions on supporting autistic members in 2023.

A number of submissions were also worked on during the period including:

- Submission to IHREC Draft "Code of Practice on the Nature and Extent of an Employer's Obligation to Provide Reasonable Accommodation to Employees with Disabilities
- Submission to DSP on the Reasonable Accommodation Fund

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. A major Care conference was also held in November 2022 and a roundtable meeting with Traveller and Roma groups in March 2023.

Two new statutory Codes of Practice developed by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (the 'Commission') have been launched to help eliminate pay inequality and tackle workplace harassment and sexual harassment. They set out the procedures and steps to ensure that employees receive equal pay for like work in Ireland's workplaces, and are not subjected to harassment or sexual harassment in employment. The new Codes are legally admissible in evidence in proceedings before the courts, the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court. We are awaiting publication of one on reasonable accommodation.

Other initiatives

Congress participated in an expert panel for the Children's Rights Alliance annual score card of the government's performance in relation to children's rights commitments in the programme for government.

Congress had an input into the Irish Hospice Foundation draft guide for employers on Responding to Suicide



in the Workplace called *Breaking the* Silence and got some useful language in relation to developing policies with staff and their representatives and spoke at launch.

We participated in the ETUC Equality and Non-Discrimination Group meetings.

Congress ensured visibility for trade unions in Pride week, working with Karl Hayden in FSU on a number of the webinars and embedding video recordings of all the sessions prominently on our website.

In December 2022 Congress addressed the international conference hosted by Ruhama in partnership with SERP. Breaking the Silence explored the hidden sexual violence and sexual exploitation of women in the Irish and global sex trade.

We have campaigned on a number of fronts to ensure ratification of ILO Convention 190, including:

- Attending two-year anniversary event for ILO Convention 190 where a training kit was launched
- Summer 2021 joint press release with Action Aid and Men's Development Network on ratification of ILO Convention 190 campaign
- Joint letter to TDs regarding ratification of ILO Convention 190 as part of the 16 days campaign to tackle gender-based violence
- Submission to DETE consultation on ratification of ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work

Finally, we welcomed ratification in January 2023.

NI EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Equality and Human Rights subgroup (EHRSG) continues to meet with members of the NIC, Equality Officers from affiliated unions together with Chairs of NIC ICTU Equality Committees.

During the period, the EHRSG engaged with the dedicated mechanism unit of the Northern Ireland Human Rights and Equality Commissions. Engagement took place with regards to the scope of article two of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol as well as the DMU's extensive research programme, including their work on the Retained EU Law Bill.

Under the auspices of the EHRSG, a response was prepared to the consultation on the UK government's proposals to scrap the Human Rights Act and replace it with a British Bill of Rights.

Members of the Committee also gave evidence to the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights at Stormont noting that:

The UK government has initiated a review of the operation of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), within the context of the longstanding policy of the UK Conservatives to replace or amend the Act. The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into Northern Ireland law, including direct access to the courts and remedies for breaches, is a core provision of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement,

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and is currently provided for via the HRA. Congress is concerned that changes or weakening of the HRA would contravene the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement, are unnecessary and could destabilise the peace settlement.

Congress is further concerned by the potential that this review has to cut across the work of this Committee to consider a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland that would supplement the ECHR. We would urge that the Committee see the ECHR, as given effect in domestic law through the HRA, as the minimum human rights framework that should apply in Northern Ireland.

In conclusion, we noted that ICTU welcomes the renewed focus on the Bill of Rights that the Ad Hoc Committee brought and observed

that A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland is no less relevant today as it was 23 years ago in 1998. Indeed, with the realisation of Brexit, and attacks on the Human Rights Act and workers' rights by the Conservative government appearing imminent, it is now more important than ever.

The Equality Committees of the NIC continued to meet during this period.

NI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The Officers during the period were Geraldine Alexander, NIPSA, Chairperson, until February 2023 and replaced by Maxine Murphy Higgins, NASUWT; Danielle McCusker, UNISON, Vice Chair until February 2023 and replaced by Tina Creaney, NIPSA; Eileen Gorman, FSU, Secretary.



Womens committee chairs and mayor at 2022 Seminar. Credit: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

The NIC ICTU Women's Committee adapted quickly to the particular challenges during Covid 19. Under the Chair of Geraldine Alexander and latterly Maxine Murphy Higgins, the Committee held regular meetings during the period which proved lively, motivating and a crucial exchange of information and solidarity during lockdowns and working from home.

The Committee, through members and their unions, 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 the menopause.

Abortion

Despite the introduction of long fought for legislation reforming archaic abortion law in Northern Ireland, many months on, the full realisation of reproductive rights for women in Northern Ireland is still some way off.

The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulation 2020 came into force on the 31 March 2020. For the first time the regulations made provision for a legal framework for abortion provision in Northern Ireland. However, despite this, it took successive interventions from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to force the Department of Health to act to provide a resourced service; this is still lacking and there are still delays for women seeking to access abortions.

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 a range of affiliated unions as well as allies in Alliance for Choice³ in their work.

Other Legislative Changes

Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly were held in May 2022 and the Assembly was dissolved at the end of March 2022. It is regrettable that a Northern Ireland Executive has still not been formed and Congress has made strong calls to get Stormont back to work. Prior to the dissolution, there were some positive developments with a number of progressive Private Members Bill becoming law. Many members of the Women's Committee were involved in both influencing the content of these Bills and also in ensuring that they had the support of sufficient MLAs to get through the legislative process.

Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Act

No one should lose their job or pay because of domestic abuse. In this Assembly mandate, former Green Party MLA Rachel Woods introduced a Private Members Bill (PMB) to introduce paid domestic abuse leave. Congress fully engaged with Rachel and her team throughout the drafting of the Bill and we welcomed the final format as it was introduced to the NI Assembly.

³ https://www.alliance4choice.com/



The PMB was debated on the last sitting day of the Assembly and was carried, Royal Assent has also been granted. The drawing up of the regulations rests with the Department for the Economy; in his statement to the Assembly during the debate of the Bill, Minister for the Economy Gordon Lyons welcomed the Bill and committed to carrying out the necessary work involved in drafting the regulations in a timely manner.

The Department for the Economy has still to confirm the commencement date of the legislation and Congress and members of the Women's Committee continue to meet with Officials from the Department to discuss the content of the regulations and urge a speedy timescale.

Northern Ireland is the first UK jurisdiction to pass legislation of this kind that will enable victims of domestic abuse to avail of statutory entitlements without having to consider sick leave, or utilising holidays. It is hoped that the introduction of the legislation will also open up dialogue between employers, trade unions and employees, to facilitate a supportive working environment for employees experiencing domestic abuse.

The Act entitles victims of domestic abuse to no less than 10 days paid leave in each leave year for the purposes of dealing with issues related to domestic abuse. Issues relating to domestic abuse are noted as including:

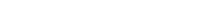
- a. Obtaining legal advice, or pursuing legal proceedings
- b. Finding alternative accommodation
- c. Accessing healthcare
- d. Obtaining welfare support
- e. Protecting family members

UK ratifies ILO Convention 190 – finally

On 7 March 2022, the UK government ratified the International Labour Organisation1 Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. This binding treaty and its accompanying recommendation outlines measures and actions that which should be taken by government, employers and trade unions. The convention sets out responsibilities on governments to recognise the effects of domestic violence and, so far as is reasonably practicable, mitigate its impact in the world of work.

The ratification came after intensive joint lobbying from Congress and the TUC of the Westminster government and the Northern Ireland Executive. The ICTU Women's Committee and the Equality Officer is actively engaging with departments to give full effect to this important international instrument.

Early indications from the Department for the Economy however do not seem positive with the Minister indicating that it was not their intention to introduce further legislative measures. This is despite the UK government pledging to introduce proactive duties on employers to prevent sexual harassment at work.



Period Products (Free Provision) Act

The Period Products (Free Provision) Bill was brought forward by SDLP MLA Pat Catney and received royal assent in May 2022.

The Period Products (Free Provision) Bill has three broad policy objectives:

- 1. To place a duty on the Executive Office to ensure that period products are available free of charge on a universal basis in appropriate locations.
- 2. To require the Executive Office to specify by way of regulations public service bodies who have a duty to ensure period products are widely obtainable free of charge in their premises.
- 3. To place a number of duties on departments and other specified public service bodies in respect of their obligations under this Bill and to place a duty on Departments to issue guidance on the exercise of the functions conferred on specified public service bodies.

A number of affiliates and members of the Women's Committee actively engaged in the Period Dignity campaign, leading calls for free period product provision over a number of years.

Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill

The Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill ⁴ also passed its final stage in the Northern Ireland Assembly before the dissolution prior to the elections.

The Bill provides for the Department of Health to establish safe access zones for premises providing abortion services. It also creates a criminal offence to act or make a recording in a safe access zone with the intent of, or reckless effect of directly or indirectly influencing, preventing or impeding access, or causing harassment, alarm or distress to a person attending a protected premises.

Progress on this Bill has stalled however as the Attorney General for Northern Ireland is using their powers of referral to bring a challenge to the Supreme Court, arguing that the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill is beyond the legislative competency of the Northern Ireland Assembly as it breaches the European Convention on Human Rights, as incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998.

The NIC ICTU Women's Committee fully supports the Bill and commends Clare Bailey, former MLA and Green Party Leader in leading on this important issue.

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 indepth analysis of the effects of the pandemic on women. The Feminist Recovery Plan⁵ was produced in the summer of 2020 and ran to over a hundred pages long covering health,

⁴ http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/non-executive-bill-proposals/abortion-services-safe-access-zones-bill/

⁵ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://wrda.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WPG-NI-Feminist-Recovery-Plan-2020.pdf

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

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 childcare, 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 on women and gender equality.



Northern Ireland Strategic Equality Strategies

The New Decade New Approach agreement promised the publication of long-awaited social inclusion 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 (ICTU), Taryn Trainor, (UNITE) and John Patrick Clayton, (UNISON).

At time of preparing this report, the Co design groups working on each of the strategies had committed significant time and energy to preparing robust documents. It is hoped that the eventual draft strategies presented for public consultation will reflect this work.

Workplace Guidance

Joint Guidance on the Menopause in the Workplace

Congress, together with the Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, collaborated on joint Guidance aimed at employers and trade unions on managing menopause in the workplace. The Guidance has been promoted through a number of media appearances, webinars and through social media. The webinars have been extremely popular and as well as promoting the Joint Guidance, also offered the opportunity to showcase the work which is being undertaken by unions and employers to promote best practice in this area.

Joint Guidance on Domestic and Sexual Violence in the Workplace

Congress has collaborated with the LRA to produce Joint Guidance for employers and trade unions on best practice in relation to the issues associated with domestic and sexual violence. This important publication has proven to be extremely timely given the passage of the Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Bill which provides for up to 10 days safe leave for those who are or have experienced domestic violence. The Joint Guidance was also promoted through a podcast and on mainstream and social media.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Sexual harassment in the workplace or associated with work continues to be a significant issue for many workers, predominantly affecting women. Congress is working with the LRA to produce joint guidance and will use the findings from the Congress survey on sexual harassment as a source document.

Up-Skirting and Down-Blousing now recognised as Criminal Offences

Women's Committee member
Maxine Murphy Higgins (NASUWT)
represented the Committee in a
Women's Policy group Evidence
session to the Justice Committee
during the scrutiny phase of the
Justice (Sexual Offences and
Trafficking Victims) Bill. NASUWT
members were the subject of
these horrific sexual offences and
NASUWT has been to the forefront
of campaigning to have the so-called
up-skirting and down-blousing



recognised as crimes. This Act rightly recognises them as criminal offences.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy

Following the high-profile murders of women including Sarah Everard and Ashling Murphy, The Executive Office announced the development of a Violence against Women and Girls strategy, something which the trade union movement has been calling for over many years.

Congress responded to the VAWG call for views and was represented on the Co design group which met a number of times in late 2022. The Women's Committee, together with Congress Secretariat has met with officials from TEO a number of times to highlight the need to include the workplace in the eventual strategy (including the realisation of ILO C190) and to press for legislative reform where necessary.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy

Congress is represented on the current advisory group to the Domestic and Sexual Violence strategy and responded to the call for views on the new strategy.

Members of the Congress Women's Committee and the Congress Secretariat play an active role on a number of coalition groups including the Equality Coalition, the Human Rights Consortium and the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform.

Industrial Action and Campaigns

Members of the Women's Committee have been involved in notable industrial disputes during the period including the fight, led by Unite, to keep the Regina Coeli women's hostel in Belfast open.

The Women's Committee support the Unite-led 'Women Demand Better' rally in Belfast in late 2022 which included speakers from Regina Coeli, a range of organisations and a representative from the NIC ICTU Women's Committee.

Other affiliated unions also took part in industrial action and campaigns during the period covered by the report and members of the Women's Committee have been active in these actions.

NI DISABILITY COMMITTEE

The Officers were:

- Chair Lucia Collins, NIPSA
- Vice Chair Pete Brennan, SIPTU
- Secretary Pauline Hurst, UTU

The Disability Committee organised a well-attended seminar on mental health focusing on the HSENI's Stress Management Standards as well as the equality law issues for trade union representatives.

The Committee held regular meetings which included guest speakers from Disability Action as well as the National Union for Supported Employment. Members of the Committee and Secretariat contributed to strategic engagement on the Department for Communities Disability Employment Strategy and

members of the Committee North and South attended the Harkin International Summit which was held in Belfast for the first time.

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.

Following on from engagement with Belfast Pride, Congress organised a coordinated presence of trade unions at Belfast pride in 2022. It was agreed that this was extremely successful and gave significant profile to trade unions at the largest parade in Northern Ireland. The Secretariat also had engagement with Pride Committees in Foyle and Omagh. There has been an engagement with Belfast Pride ahead of the 2023 March and Festival.



LGBT groups from several affiliates marched at Belfast Pride 2022. Credit: John O'Farrell

SECTION TWO

IV. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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 two 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 three 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 since Covid 19 the course has been offered online via Webex.



The numbers attending modules were as follows:

Class	July- Aug	Sept- Dec	Jan- April	April- June	Sept- Dec	Jan- Mar
	2021	2021	2022	2022	2022	2023**
Dublin Class B	14	13	15	13		
Limerick	5					
Sligo	6					
Dublin A & C		17				
Limerick & Sligo		5	3			
Galway		5	10			
Waterford & Cork		7				
Dublin A & Waterford			16			
Sligo, Limerick & SIPTU Staff			8			
Cork			24	9		
Dublin Group 1			20			
Dublin Group 2/3			9			
Dublin Group 2			7			
Dublin Group 3			9			
Dublin A, Dublin Group 2 & Waterford				14		
Dublin Elective & Galway				6		
Dublin Group 1 & 3				16		
Dublin A & Dublin Group 2					14	
Dublin A Elect & Cork					10	
Dublin Group 1, 3 & Galway					24	
Dublin B & Sligo					15	
Limerick & SIPTU Staff					16	
Dublin – Return to Learn					2	
Dub A & Elect, Cork & Galway A & B						14
Dub A, Limerick, Galway A & B						9
Dub B & Sligo						12
Dub B, Sligo, SIPTU Staff and Dub 2						13
Dub 1 & 2, Sligo						21

^{**} Note: At time of writing classes for Jan 2023 are projected numbers not actual number of people that attended class and submitted projects etc.



CONGRESS CENTRES NETWORK

The Congress Centres Network (CCN) has continued to encounter difficulties during the course of 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 be close their doors.

Arrangements were made to transfer CE participants to other schemes and the respective Boards dealt with trying to arrange an orderly closure of the companies running the respective 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 work helping the unemployed and others.

The Centres run Major Awards from QQI Level 3 to QQI Level 6. These Awards includes eight minor awards to include 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 from 2021 to present 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
- Communications QQI Level 5
- Work Experience QQI Level 5
- Web Authoring QQI Level 5
- The Internet QQI Level 5



- Customer Services QQI Award Level 5
- Word Processing QQI Award Level 4 / 5
- Spreadsheet Methods QQI Award Level 5
- Tourism Awareness QQI Award Level 4
- Retail Sales Techniques QQI Award Level 4
- Advanced Certificate in Office Management QQI Award Level 6
- Healthcare Assistant Elder Abuse & Potential Aggression, CPR, Patient Handling
- Progression of Learners
- Since the arrival of Ukrainian refugees, the Centres have successfully delivered training to all age groups (English classes, 80, Reception and Frontline Office Skills 40, Payroll 20, Word Processing 10 and Spreadsheets 10).

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 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.

THE 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 2022 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 Biennial Report, 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 well-being, especially in the area of mental health.

The College has fully reopened and returned to face-to-face learning and it is great to see many students coming back to us after Covid 19. Our students are looking to get out, come back to normality, return to their class and enjoy the social aspect of been part of the People's College community.

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 Kilkenny 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 Trade Union Education Programme (TUEP) 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. Around one thousand learners participate in the training and seminars offered by NIC ICTU each year.

Academic studies show that professionally trained union representatives make a real difference in workplaces. They improve workers' terms of pay and conditions; protect members and jobs; ensure safer working environments; promote equality, wellbeing, fairness, and social cohesion; and enable access to skills, training, and development.

New Developments

TUEP continues to develop with a number of new courses added to the programme reflecting demand from affiliates and changes in the workplace and society.

TUEP prepares workers for new developments in the world of work through, for example, our *Climate*



Crisis and the Workplace course. Recognising that the workplace will be affected by changes resulting from the climate crisis this course looks at a 'just transition' to a greener economy, where workers have a central voice in planning the transition and encourages learners to be part of the efforts to decarbonise and move to a more sustainable, zero-waste, circular economy.

Other new accredited courses include, Menopause and the Workplace, and Hybrid Working and Working from Home, in recognition that this has become the new norm for many, bringing benefits, but also challenges and risks for workers. TUEP also run courses aimed primarily at union officials such as the Digital Organising and campaigning course.

As union representatives are more effective if they possess up-to-date skills and knowledge relevant to their role TUEP are now offering opportunities for 'repeat' or 'refresher' training in a limited range of accredited courses. TUEP regularly review courses to ensure that the content meets the needs of the modern workplace ensuring that reps keep abreast of legislative changes, developments in best practice workplace policies and wider skills.

TUEP developed an accredited course with Belfast City of Sanctuary on workplace discrimination and the role of trade unions delivered to representatives of ethnic minority communities.

For further information or if you wish to enquire about arranging bespoke courses for your union please contact the NIC ICTU Education Officer at kevin.doherty@ictuni.net

About the Programme

TUEP contains progression pathways for union officials, union representatives, health and safety representatives, equality representatives, union learning representatives and members. All courses are accredited through Open College Network (OCN). On successful completion learners will obtain level 2, or 3 Awards, Certificates, or Diplomas. 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. Online evening courses are also now available.

The programme is delivered in partnership with the South Eastern Regional College and OCN NI, and it is supported by the Department for the Economy.

The NIC ICTU Education Department also designs and delivers bespoke courses to meet the needs of affiliates which can be run in affiliates' offices, the workplace and other locations.

The enforced and immediate move in 2020 to an online learning delivery model presented some significant problems for TUEP. However, the switch to online learning has had positive dimensions. TUEP has become more accessible to learners across NI and to those with

disabilities, or caring responsibilities. More learners are attending TUEP webinars. And online learning has facilitated successful accredited evening courses.

The majority of TUEP courses continue to be delivered online, but some are delivered in the classroom, or through a hybrid model. The method of delivery will be continuously reviewed.

Accredited Courses

TUEP offers the following core union representatives courses:

- Certificate Courses:
- 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

Diploma Courses:

- Employment Law
- Occupational Health and Safety

In addition, TUEP offer a further and developing range of accredited courses, including:

- Ensuring Safe Workplaces
- Working from Home
- Dealing with Stress
- Bullying and Intimidating Behaviour in the Workplace
- Negotiation and Communication Skills
- Handling Grievance and disciplines
- Disability Champions
- Pay and Bargaining
- Equality Law
- Tackling Prejudice in the Workplace

- Digital Organising
- Equality Reps in the Workplace
- Confidence in the Workplace
- Climate Crisis and the Workplace
- · Dealing with Redundancies
- Mental Health and the workplace
- Learning and Organising
- Taking a Case to Tribunals
- Menopause and the workplace
- Campaigning
- Hybrid Working

Further details can be found at https://www.ictuni.org/education



Webinars and Seminars

NIC ICTU also run a variety of unaccredited seminars on various employment related issues. Some of the seminars are delivered in partnership with affiliate unions, the Nevin Economic Research Institute, Belfast City of Sanctuary, the Migrant Centre NI, the Labour Relations Agency, and the Equality Commission. Most of the seminars have been delivered through webinars, which has resulted in an increase in attendance.

The topics include:

- Bullying and harassment in the Workplace
- Multi-ethnic workplaces
- European developments on Employment Law
- Agency Workers Directive

- Dignity at Work
- Flexible Working
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Disability Law in the Workplace
- Legislative Reform
- Leadership in the Workplace
- · Health and Safety
- Challenging Racism
- Pregnancy and Maternity rights
- Menopause and the Workplace
- Family Friendly workplaces
- Managing Conflict at Work

Further details can be found at https://www.ictuni.org/seminars-webinars



UNION LEARNING

Under an agreement with the Department for the Economy, NIC ICTU continues to have full responsibility for the administrative and financial management of the Union Learning Fund (ULF). The ULF currently supports the following 11 workplace learning projects:

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



Congress Training Courses.



During the 2021-2023 reporting period, ULF projects engaged with and supported more than 7,000 workers. Outcomes achieved to date include:

- 500 workplace learners completed Essential Skills courses in Numeracy, Literacy, or IT.
- 2,000 workplace learners completed up-skilling or vocational qualifications.
- 220 migrant workers completed OET, IELTS training or ESOL qualifications.
- 2,500 workplace learners completed Continued Professional Development (CPD) courses.
- 750 workplace learners completed introductory IT courses.
- Projects helped 670 workers with CV writing and interview skills.

 Projects helped over, 500 workers facing redundancy with reskilling or upskilling job-specific training interventions.

Lockdown Learning

Primarily, ULF projects rely on FE colleges to deliver essential skills and other upskilling or vocational qualifications to project participants. Covid 19 affected educational systems throughout Northern Ireland. 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 the pandemic, the ULF project successfully achieved targets agreed upon with the Department for the Economy.



Union Learning Conference

In March 2022, the annual Union Learning conference was held virtually. The conference theme, '20 years of Empowering Workers', celebrated 20 years of the Union Learning Fund in Northern Ireland. Conference heard from the ULF project managers, celebrating past successes and discussing future opportunities for the ULF.

Skills Strategy

In May 2021, the Department for the Economy launched a consultation paper on a new Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland: 'Skills for a 10x Economy'. The NIC ICTU response⁶ highlighted the work and aims of the Union Learning fund and made the following recommendations:

- Maintain the Union Learning Fund with increased multi-annual funding.
- Promote Collective Bargaining as a way to encourage employer investment in skills.

Following the consultation, *Skills for a 10x economy - Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland* ⁷was published in May 2022. The strategy recognised the work and aims of the ULF which links directly to the following policy objectives:

- Policy Objective 1: Addressing Skills Imbalances, Driving Economic Growth
- Policy Objective 2: Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning

⁶ https://www.ictuni.org/publications/nic-ictu-skills-strategy-consultation-response

⁷ https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/skills-10x-economy-skills-strategy-northern-ireland



V. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, CAMPAIGNS & COMMUNICATIONS

CAMPAIGNS & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

CONGRESS HOUSING/RAISE THE ROOF CAMPAIGN

Public health guidelines arising from Covid 19 were in place for much of the period under review and, as such, restricted the ability of groups such as Raise the Roof to engage in campaign activity.

Nonetheless, in July 2021 a limited rally - in line with health guidelines - was held at the Department of Housing to protest the repeated delays in the publication of the new government's official strategy to address the worsening housing crisis.

The new strategy - Housing for All - was eventually published in September 2021. While the new plan promised a major departure from previous policy and contained significant headline numbers and targets, a deeper analysis prepared by Congress revealed strong continuity between Housing for All and the failed Rebuilding Ireland plan.



Raise the Roof Rally on Housing 26 Nov 2022 Carrying the Banner. Credit: Speirs



In particular, the overall targets for public housing, affordable homes and cost rental contained in the Housing for All plan were (and remain) far too low to address the scale of need that had developed over the years of crisis. In addition, the plan persisted with the official dependency on private developers to provide what is an essential public good, with a diminished role for the State and local authorities. Crucially, the strategy emphasised the need for greater supply in order to resolve the problem, while Congress has consistently pointed out that affordable supply - for purchase or rents - should be the focus.

The Congress analysis of official housing policy was augmented with a very successful webinar (October 2021) which featured expert input from Professor Orla Hegarty, architect Mel Reynolds and academic Rory Hearne.

As public health restrictions were gradually lifted in the early months of 2022, Raise the Roof began to plan for a greater level of public campaign activity, with a focus on expanding the campaign activity to centres outside Dublin.

Over the course of June and July, the campaign held a very successful and well-attended series of public meetings on housing, featuring a range of expert and political speakers and the testimony of those directly impacted and affected by the current emergency. The meetings helped to create the basis for local Raise the Roof groups in the various centres.

The public meetings took place in the Dan Shaw Centre, Navan (1 June); Tower Hotel, Waterford (7 June); Strand Hotel, Limerick (13 June); SIPTU Hall, Galway (28 June); Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth (4 July). The series also included a major seminar on housing in Dublin's Mansion House (21 June) that was hosted by then Lord Mayor, Cllr Alison Gilliland.

In the months that followed, campaign activity was focused on developing campaign capacity and infrastructure, including the development of a new website⁸, new and dedicated social media platforms and the publication of a new Raise the Roof manifesto *A New Deal for Housing*.

Plans were also unveiled for an additional series of public meetings across the capital city coupled with a national Rally for Housing, set for Saturday 26 November. The new Congress General Secretary, Owen Reidy, was a keynote speaker at the launch of this latest phase of campaign activity.

The Dublin series of meetings took place in Tallaght (1 Nov); Donnycarney (3 Nov); Dun Laoghaire (21 Nov); Woodquay Venue, City Centre (23 Nov); Swords (24 Nov).

The Rally for Housing that took place on 26 November saw up to 15,000 people take part and was one of the largest public demonstrations, since the lifting of Covid restrictions.

It featured an impressive turnout from affiliated trade unions and gained extensive media and political coverage in the lead up to and in

⁸ https://www.raisetheroof.ie/



Raise the Roof Rally on Housing 26 Nov 2022. Credit: Speirs.

the aftermath of the event. Indeed, close coordination among affiliates in the lead up to the event was crucial to ensuring that key messages on how the housing crisis was impairing recruitment and the delivery of essential public services, were central to coverage of the event.

Among the keynote speakers on the day were Congress Vice President Phil Ní Shéaghdha and housing expert Rory Hearne. The event also featured a number of musicians, including: Lisa O'Neill, Donal Lunny, Brendan Begley, and Laura Quirke.

At the time of writing, campaign work was ongoing in response to the government decision (March) to end the moratorium on evictions, that had been in place since October 2022. This despite clear evidence that the moratorium has helped prevent a rapid and significant escalation in the homeless numbers, evictions being the single greatest cause of homelessness. In addition, figures

from the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) showed a major rise in eviction notices, with up to 3,000 to come into force when the ban ended on April 1, 2023.

Raise the Roof wrote to all TDs and Senators calling for the ban to be restored and retained, until government had put in place the measures required to ensure no one would be forced into homelessness, when a tenancy ended.

Along with Congress, Raise the Roof also made a detailed submission to the Housing Commission consultation on a referendum on housing, setting out the case for the holding of a referendum on the right to housing, at the earliest possible opportunity.

At the time of writing, the Housing Commission had not yet issued its findings/report on this issue.



COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

MEDIA MATTERS

The Congress Communications Office has increased content across multiple media platforms whilst simultaneously promoting values and concerns on the social and economic interests of the island North and South.

Congress has built a strong presence on the media landscape among journalists across the island at the local and national levels.

A key development was the launch of a new website in October 2021. In that year there were 87,444 user sessions. This grew to 96,401 user sessions in 2022. There were 178,000 page views in the year (source Infobo) compared to 169,392 in 2021.

The ICTU NI website had 9,016 user sessions in 2021. There were 19,883 page views in the year. The site had 10,308 user sessions in 2022. There were 22,640 page views in that year showing an approximate 10% increase.

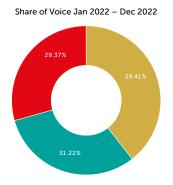
The new Congress website is a vital tool for relaying information and during Covid 19 it was effective in getting the message out on issues such as workers' rights, and the work safety protocol negotiated with government.

The Communications Office has also highlighted issues such as the right to collective bargaining, precarious work, homelessness, and racism.

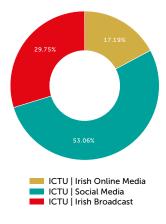
In a review of the most popular 100 website pages in 2021, the media

page and news updates were the most read. The new layout featured the 'join a union' link which was the most popular read for visitors to the site in 2022. Blogs also proved popular and one by Laura Bambrick relating to the historic marriage bar ban on employing married women was widely referenced along with her article on workers' new right to disconnect.

In 2022, there was an increase in social media use particularly on Twitter. The Share of Voice pie chart, which is a measure of the market your brand owns compared to your competitors, shows online media had a reach of 39.4%, social media was 31.2% and broadcast media had a share of 29.4% (Source Meltwater)'



Share of Voice 31 Dec 2022 - March 2023



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CONGRESS STUDIO TRAINING

The Congress Studio Training programme was also severely impacted and restricted by the public health measures initiated as part of the response to Covid 19.

As a result, we were forced to end inperson studio-based courses, which primarily affected the media training module. However, it was possible to move other courses wholly online, primarily those dealing with Video Creation and Editing and Podcast Recording and Editing.

The training is available to all affiliates and members. At the time of writing, a new course offering in these areas is being devised and a new training schedule is also under consideration.

Over the period under review, a total of 74 participants completed the two training courses, with 39 attending Video Creation and 35 attending the Podcasting course.

CONGRESS POLICY PAPERS & SUBMISSIONS

2021 (July-Dec)

- Congress Budget 2022 Priorities No Going Back: For A Fairer Future (October 2021)
- Trade Unions and Mental Health e-book (October 2021)
- FLAT BROKE! Unemployment Benefit in Ireland (November 2021)
- Congress Guidance for Private Sector Unions on Pay Bargaining in 2022 (December 2021)
- Response to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- Public Consultation on the Draft Agri-Food Strategy 2030 (June 2021)
- Towards a National Action Plan Against Racism for Ireland Congress Submission to Public Consultation 2021 (July 2021)
- Submission to the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the Working from Home (Covid 19) Bill 2020 (August 2021)
- Response to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Public Consultation on the review of the Critical Skills Occupations List and the Ineligible Occupations List (August 2021)
- · Congress Submission to Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Strategy Statement 2022-24 Consultation (August 2021)
- Congress Submission to SDG National Implementation Plan Consultation 2021 (September 2021)
- Response to the Department of the Taoiseach's Public Consultation on the Draft National Risk Assessment: Overview of Strategic Risks 2021/2022 (September 2021)
- Submission on participation in political, cultural, community and public life. (Articles 29 & 30 UN Convention on Rights of Persons with a Disability) (September 2021)
- **Evidence to Justice Committee** on Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill (September 2021)
- Submission to Review of Equality Acts (December 2021)
- Public Consultation on the transposition of directive (EU)



- 2021/2101 amending Directive 2013/34/EU as regards disclosure of income tax information by certain undertakings and branches (December 2021)
- Submission to the Department of Health on Ireland's report on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (September 2021)
- Submission to the Framework Agreement on Active Ageing and an Intergenerational Approach (October 2021)
- Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science Reform of the Leaving Certificate (October 2021)
- Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Sick Leave Bill 2021 (November 2021)
- Opening Statement to Joint
 Oireachtas Committee on
 Enterprise, Trade and Employment
 on pre-legislative scrutiny of the
 General Scheme of the Sick Leave
 Bill 2021 (November 2021)
- Opening Statement to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection on the Report of the Commission on Pensions (November 2021)
- Submission to Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights (November 2021)
- Evidence to Ad Hoc Committee on Bill of Rights (November 2021)
- Response to ICESCR UK State party examination (December 2022)

 Submission to West Offaly Power Consultation on behalf of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' Energy Sector Group (December 2021)

2022

- Congress Guidance for Private Sector Unions on Pay Bargaining in 2022 (February 2022)
- Congress Guidance for Private Sector Unions on Pay Bargaining in 2023 (December 2022)
- The Social Wage: Public services and income supports in Ireland and the EU (May 2022)
- MAKE REMOTE WORK! The Trade Union Response to the Right to Request Remote Working Bill (February 2022)
- Gender Pay Gap Reporting
 Guidance for unions on closing
 the gender pay gap and bringing
 the issue into collective bargaining
 (Dr Jane Pillinger) (August 2022)
- Time to Climate and Employment Proof our Workplaces (September 2022)
- A New Deal for Housing (Raise the Roof) Housing for All (November 2022)
- Congress Budget 2023 Priorities: Raising Wages, Reducing Living Costs (September 2022)
- Final Report of the LEEF High Level Working Group on Collective Bargaining (October 2022)
- Covid feminist recovery plan submission and update for Womens' Policy Group (January 2022)
- Submission to the Commission on Taxation and Welfare (January 2022)
- Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade



- and Employment on pre-legislative scrutiny of Right to Request Remote Working Bill (February 2022)
- Submission to the Joint Committee on Education on the Future Funding of Higher Education (February 2022)
- Submission to the Consultation on Draft Territorial Just Transition Plan (February 2022)
- The European Semester process and the development of Ireland's National Reform Programme 2022 (February 2022)
- Evidence to Committee for the Economy on Zero Hour Contracts PMB (February 2022)
- Response to Employment (Zero Hours Workers and Banded Weekly Working Hours) Bill consultation (February 2022)
- Opening Statement to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on pre-legislative scrutiny of Right to Request Remote Working Bill 2022 (March 2022)
- Submission from the Irish
 Congress of Trade Unions to the
 Central Bank Consultation on
 Mortgage Measures Framework
 Review (March 2022)
- Congress Submission to the Joint Committee on Gender Equality (April 2022)
- Evidence to Committee for the Economy on Employment (Zero Hours Workers and Banded Weekly Working Hours) Bill (April 2022)
- Congress Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on the provisions of the General Scheme

- of a Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2022 (May 2022)
- Response to Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill (May 2022)
- Response to proposals to introduce a British Bill of Rights (May 2022)
- Submission to DSP on the Reasonable Accommodation Fund (RAF) (May 2022)
- Response to Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024 (June 2022)
- Submission to IHREC Draft
 "Code of Practice on the Nature
 and Extent of an Employer's
 Obligation to Provide Reasonable
 Accommodation to Employees
 with Disabilities (July 2022)
- Submission to Seanad Public Consultation Committee on the Constitutional Future of the island of Ireland (September 2022)
- Submission to Consultation on the Climate Action Plan 2023 (September 2022)
- Submission to the Housing Commission Public Consultation on a Referendum on Housing (September 2022)
- Submission to OECD Peer Review of Ireland's National Contact Point for the OECD MNE Guidelines (September 2022)
- Submission to the Commission on Aviation Regulation – Landing Charges at Dublin Airport (September 2022)
- Submission to DETE Consultation on ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 (October 2022)



- Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on Autism (October 2022)
- Opening Statement to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment on cost-of-living, minimum wage and the Low Pay Commission recommendation for 2023 (October 2022)
- Review of the Security of Energy Supply of Ireland's Electricity and Natural Gas Systems Consultation (October 2022)
- Congress opening statement to Joint Oireachtas Committee on CEDIY Pre-Committee Stage Scrutiny of The Organisation of Working Time (Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2020 [Private Members Bill] (sponsored by Mary Lou McDonald T.D. and Louise O'Reilly T.D.) (October 2022)
- Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on Autism (October 2022)
- Submission to Public Consultation on Ireland's Road Haulage Strategy 2022-2031(November 2022)
- Submission on the Development of a National Horticulture Strategy to 2030 (November 2022)
- Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection on pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System for Ireland Bill 2022 (November 2022)
- Opening Statement to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection on pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Automatic Enrolment Retirement Savings System for

- Ireland Bill 2022 (December 2022)
- Submission to Oireachtas
 Select Committee on Budgetary
 Oversight on the report of the
 Commission on Taxation and
 Welfare chapters 9-12 (December 2022)

2023

- The Social Wage: Pay-Related Benefit for Unemployed Workers (March 2023)
- No Going Back: Three Year Review (May 2023)
- Workers and the EU: Reflections on Ireland's membership (May 2023)
- Retired Workers Committee Induction Handbook (June 2023)
 Opening Statement to Oireachtas Select Committee on Budgetary Oversight on the report of the Commission on Taxation and Welfare chapters 9-12 (January 2023)
- Public Consultation on HSA's Code of Practice for Indoor Air Quality January 2023 submitted by Health and Safety Committee ICTU (January 2023)
- Submission to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the Al Liability Directive (January 2023)
- Submission on the development of Revenue's Statement of Strategy 2023-2025 (February 2023)
- Submission to the Labour Court Review of Joint Labour Committees (February 2023)
- Evidence to NI Affairs Committee on impact of austerity on women (February 2023)
- Submission on the Development of a National Framework for

- Lifelong Learning (February 2023)
- Submission to the Department of the Taoiseach on the National Risk Assessment 2023 (February 2023)
- Submission to Department of Social Protection on Strategy Statement for 2023-2026 (February 2023)
- Submission to Department of Social Protection on Pay-Related Benefit for Jobseekers (March 2023)
- Submission on Ireland's performance on the SDGs with a particular focus on Goal 8 in advance of Ireland's Voluntary National Review at the UN in July
- Submission to OECD Consultation on targeted updates to the MNE Guidelines (February 2023)



REPORT ON BIENNIAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE 2021

The Irish Congress of Trade Union's Biennial Delegate Conference 2021 took place in the ICC Waterfront Arena, Belfast on 26 and 27 October 2021. Mr Gerry Murphy, Congress President presided over the proceedings.

Due to Covid 19, BDC 2021 took place in a hybrid format with a mix of delegates attending in-person and remotely. While every effort was made to ensure all delegates could participate in BDC to the greatest possible extent, the requirements to fully observe public health advice meant that participation had to be different from previous occasions. Mask wearing was mandatory for all delegates in the conference hall. It was decided that 305 was the maximum number of delegates that could be present in the conference venue, with the remainder of delegates and observers attending remotely. Only delegates who were fully vaccinated were advised to attend conference in-person. Track and trace procedures were put in place at BDC and delegate information was recorded for a limited period and made available to the Public Health Agency in the event of a subsequent outbreak of Covid 19. Voting at BDC 2021 was conducted by card vote. Each affiliated organisation was asked to nominate a Principal Delegate who, when required, cast the vote of that affiliated organisation.

The members of the Standing Orders Committee were: Kieran Jack McGinley (SIPTU and Chair), Joan Gaffney (Mandate), Colm Kelly (TUI) and Frances Hourihan (Unite).

273 delegates attended BDC inperson, with 223 delegates attending virtually. 65 observers attended the Conference virtually. 47 motions and one emergency motion were submitted to BDC.

The amendments to Motion 8 and Motion 9, both in the name of Fermanagh Council of Trade Unions were ruled out of order. Motion 23 in the name of RMT fell. All of the other motions were adopted. A report on the Actions on Motions to BDC 2021 is contained in Appendix 6 to this report.

Conference was opened by the Lord Mayor of Belfast the Rt Hon Councillor Kate Nicholl, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin Alison Gilliland, and Paddy Mackel, President Belfast and District Trades Council. Conference was addressed by the five main political parties in Northern Ireland who were represented by Doug Beattie (UUP), Paula Bradley (DUP), Paula Bradshaw (Alliance Party), Colm McGrath (SDLP) and Michelle O'Neill (Sinn Féin). The keynote and fraternal speakers at BDC were: EU Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, Esther Lynch (ETUC), Frances



The following Officers were elected: Kevin Callinan Fórsa (President), Phil Ní Shéaghdha INMO (Vice-President, Justin McCamphill NASUWT (Vice-President), Joe Cunningham SIPTU (Treasurer), Ciaran Rohan AHCPS, Kieran Christie ASTI, Paddy Kavanagh Connect, Brian Nolan Connect, Seán McDonagh CWU, Fionnuala Ní Bhrógáin CWU, Erin Massey CWU UK, Frank Jones IFUT, Bernard Harbor Fórsa, Katie Morgan Fórsa, Eoin Ronayne Fórsa, John O'Connell FSU, Edward Mathews INMO, John Boyle INTO, Deirdre O'Connor INTO, Gerry Murphy INTO, Gerry Light Mandate, Carmel Gates NIPSA, Brian Smyth NIPSA, Séamus Dooley NUJ, John Clinton POA, Ethel Buckley SIPTU, John King SIPTU, Gerry McCormack SIPTU, Michael Gillespie TUI, Patricia McKeown UNISON, Anne Speed UNISON, Jackie Pollock Unite, Richie Browne Unite, Kieran Smyth USDAW, and Betty Tyrrell-Collard **Dublin Council of Trade Unions was** elected to the Reserved Seat for Trades Councils. Jimmy Whelan was subsequently nominated as Retired Workers' Observer, and Ronan Sharkey was nominated as Youth Committee Observer.

Congress held the following Fringe Meetings at Conference:

Tuesday 26 October 2021:

- Trade Union Friends of Palestine 'From South Africa to Palestine – the struggle against Apartheid'
- NERI 'No Going Back The Fight for a Fairer Future'
- Global Solidarity Committee 'Trade Unions and the Threat of Populism and the Far Right'
- Four Day Working Week Ireland 'The Case for a Four Day Working Week'

Wednesday 27 October 2021:

- Fórsa 'Organising in the New Economy
- Justice for Colombia 'Trade Unions, Human Rights and Peace in Colombia'

Congress would like to acknowledge the support of our exhibitors at Conference 2021.







THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

The work of the European Trade Union Congress has never been as important for us in Ireland as it has been in the last two years. The ETUC has pioneered and led the critical work on the development of the Adequate Minimum Wages Directive. The first draft of the directive was published in October 2020. Since that time the ETUC through the leadership of the new General Secretary Esther Lynch has sought to promote trade union rights and collective bargaining as a key component of the directive. Our General Secretary Owen Reidy and Social Policy Officer Ger Gibbons represented Congress on the working group which met over 30 times during this period and ensured Irish interests were central to the outcome of the directive. We were part of a team that met with the Commissioner Schmit and with the co rapporteurs in the European Parliament Agnes Jongerius and Denis Radtke who led the parliament negotiating team. We also met with and lobbied Irish MEPs who all voted in favour of the directive and engaged with government at home and our permanent represent (Irish Embassy), in Brussels.

The experience above has highlighted just how important improving our engagement with Europe and its institutions is. We spend little of our limited resources in our engagement with Europe unlike so many of our

colleague federations across the EU (and even countries and federations such as Norway, outside of the EU). As a Congress we have given the appropriate time and attention to the Adequate Minimum Wages directive in the last two years, but we need to build up to be doing this with all directives and policies emerging from the EU.

During the year, the new General Secretary put a paper to the GPC and Executive Council which was endorsed. The paper is about improving our overall levels of engagement across the movement with the EU and its institutions, including,

- Conducting a strategic review of our engagement with and participation on the various ETUC sub-committees, thereby ensuring we have the right people on the right committees and that their work is coordinated better.
- Doing an audit of our affiliate participation on the various ETUFs (Uni, ETF, EPSU, Industrial etc) and holding a European seminar bringing all ETUFs.
- The officers of the GPC to engaged in face-to-face meetings in Brussels two to three times a year to increase our level and quality of engagement with the various European institutions, the ETUC and various other stakeholders.
- Should we be successful with the above consideration given



(subject to resources) to having an international officer who spends 50% of their time in Brussels lobbying and engaging on behalf of the ICTU and the remaining time in Ireland liaising with the Irish government regarding the implementation of key EU directives of interest to the trade union movement.

The work on this area has already commenced.

EUROPEAN SEMESTER PROCESS

Congress took part in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 'European Semester' processes of policy coordination among EU Member States. This seeks to achieve policy objectives agreed by Member States relating mainly to fiscal policy but also more recently to the green transition and digitalisation.

Congress attended stakeholder meetings with European Commission officials in February, March and November 2022, focusing on what should be in the European Commission's annual 'country report Ireland' and 'country specific recommendations' to Ireland.

Contrary to previous years, Congress was not invited by the government in early 2022 to set out our views on the development of Ireland's National Reform Programme (NRP) 2022, which set out what action Ireland is taking to achieve the agreed EU policy objectives. Congress sent recommendations nevertheless but these were not acknowledged in Ireland's NRP, published in April 2022.

The European Commission's May 2022 country specific recommendations to Ireland, approved by Member States in June 2022, emphasised the importance of the 'systematic involvement of social partners and other relevant stakeholders' in the process.

Congress was invited by government in early 2023 to comment on the development of the NRP 2023 and took part in a stakeholder consultation with government officials in February 2023.

In its engagements with European Commission and government on the European Semester, Congress repeatedly emphasises the importance of implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the provisions promoting decent work and collective bargaining and social dialogue, as well as achieving just green and digital transitions.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Congress is a member of the European Social Dialogue Committee of national trade union confederations and employers' bodies. This discusses social and employment challenges and seeks to reach agreements on specific topics, which can then be implemented, as appropriate, either at EU level or at national level, including by national confederations and employers' bodies.



The Committee's work programme 2022-2024, agreed in mid-2022, priorities six topics: telework and right to disconnect; the green transition; youth employment; work-related privacy and surveillance; improving skills matching in Europe; and capacity building of unions and employers.

To date, revision of the 2002 European Social Partners' agreement on telework has been the focus of most attention. Both sides have agreed that if a new agreement is reached, they will ask the European Commission to propose it as a draft directive for adoption by member states, as has been done with previous such agreements (e.g. the parental leave directive).

In January 2023, the European Commission issued a social dialogue package. This includes an (advisory) Recommendation on improving social dialogue, including collective bargaining, at national level as a complement to the directive on adequate minimum wages and collective bargaining, and a paper on European-level social dialogue.

TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TUAC) TO THE OECD

Congress continued to engage with the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the Parisbased Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) over this period. 58 national confederations representing 50 million workers in 30 OECD Member States are affiliated to TUAC, which has consultative status with the

OECD, similar to BUAC which represents business. Affiliated unions are also active in TUAC's sectoral committees such as education.

Congress attended TUAC (hybrid-format) plenary sessions in April and June 2022. It commented on a draft OECD report on training in enterprises in Ireland and four other European countries in October 2021 and on the draft OECD employment reports 2022 and 2023.

In February 2022 Congress met (alongside NERI) OECD officials preparing the OECD's Economic Survey Ireland 2022 (released in December 2022), in May 2022 with OECD officials assessing policy development in Ireland (report due 2023), and took part in June and October 2022 in OECD stakeholder workshops for its assessment of Ireland's skills policies (report due 2023).

The small TUAC secretariat (approximately 10) underwent a considerable change of personnel over this period, with a new interim General Secretary, Veronica Nilsson, appointed in April 2022.





Colombian Senator Victoria Sandino at the 2022 Global Solidarity Summer School.

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.

After a series of online events during Covid, the Committee was very pleased to run a Summer School in Sligo on 8/9 September 2022 with wide range of international speakers

ILO MATTERS

David Joyce continued to represent Congress in the Worker's Group at the ILO. He attended preparatory meetings of the workers group and the Irish delegation in advance of the international labour conference in the first two weeks in June. The 2021 conference was held mainly online with resolutions adopted concerning inequalities and the world of work and also concerning skills and lifelong learning.

David Joyce and Deirdre O'Connor (INTO) were among the 4,000 plus delegates from the world's trade unions, employers and governments of the 178 ILO Member States at the first in-person (since Covid) conference of the ILO in June 2022.

EUROPEAN UNION & INTERNATIONAL

The decision to "lift a safe and healthy working environment to the status of a fundamental principle and right at work" was a historic achievement for the Workers Group. The conference adopted the conclusions of the ILC's tripartite Standard-Setting Committee related to the development of a new ILO Recommendation on Quality Apprenticeships that is expected to provide guidance on promoting apprenticeships and providing adequate protection to apprentices. The conference also adopted conclusions that contain guidance on developing coherent, comprehensive and integrated employment policies, and decent work opportunities that support recovery and inclusive structural transformation.

There were also fruitful discussions on the Social and Solidarity Economy. The plenary session considered the

reports of the Director General, Guy Ryder, on work in the Least Developed Countries and the report on the situation of workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. David Joyce delivered a speech in plenary to these reports.

Significantly the period saw the ratification by the Irish and UK governments of ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

PALESTINE

A BDS working group was set up by the Executive Council to translate our conference policies on Palestine and our support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign into an effective strategy that could significantly contribute to the struggle for freedom justice and equality for the Palestinian people.



Delegates to Global Solidarity Summer School Sligo Sept 2022.



The group met regularly during 2022, carried out a survey of affiliate actions and produced a report which was endorsed by the Executive in July 2022 and contained a number of areas for action including:

- Development of information resources on BDS for affiliates
- Training and guidance to be developed and delivered
- The proposed training to include developing practical support for Pension Trustees seeking to make the case at trustee's board meetings to divest from investments linked to the Israeli State and the OPT
- The promotion of accountability measures for International companies, including those identified by the UN, considered to be complicit in human rights violations; this will include urging governments to introduce mandatory human rights due diligence which would require companies to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights
- Encourage affiliates to develop links with Palestinian trade unions, similar to the actions undertaken by some of the teaching unions
- Encourage affiliates to join the European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine
- Seek to organise a high-level Congress visit to the region
- Encourage all affiliates to become more actively involved in TUFP, North and South
- Encourage affiliates to support participation in TUFP study visits

- to the region and to promote the TUFP Ambassador programme on their return to Ireland
- Mandate the working group to develop this work further and broaden the engagement of affiliates on delivering the established aims and full implementation of Congress policy on BDS.

Since then Congress has met with the Department of Foreign Affairs regarding a delegation visit in 2023 and the feasibility of such a visit is being explored at time of writing.

Congress was a founding member of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Campaign calling on Ireland to act on Israeli apartheid against Palestinians. The new Irish Anti-Apartheid Campaign for Palestine has called on Ireland and the international community to publicly recognise that the State of Israel is committing the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people, and to take concrete measures to end this crime against humanity.

Mary Manning, the first Dunnes Stores worker to refuse to handle apartheid South Africa's fruit in July 1984, said: "I fully support the launch of this Ireland-Palestine anti-apartheid campaign. I hoped, after South Africa, that the world was finished with apartheid. Unfortunately, and sadly, that is not the case. Apartheid was not acceptable to the Irish people in the 1980s when we made our stand and it is not acceptable to them in 2022."

The coalition, made up of 16 civil society organisations, trade unions and academic experts committed to

working collaboratively to end Israeli apartheid against Palestinians.

Other activities related to Palestine included:

- Congress supported the launch of Don't Buy Into Occupation Coalition report aiming to investigate and highlight the financial relationships between business enterprises involved in the illegal Israeli settlement enterprise in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and European Financial Institutions
- We wrote a letter to Minister Coveney regarding case of a Palestinian health practitioner being held by the Israelis
- Statement on designation of Palestinian Human Rights organisations as "terrorists" released and disseminated;
- We wrote to UN General Secretary in relation to annual revision of the UN Database of companies operating in the Occupied Territories;

 We had some engagements with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories and his report on "Israel's conduct of its occupation of the Palestinian Territory: a breach of the prohibition against apartheid in international law?".

COLOMBIA

Congress continued to work closely with Justice for Colombia in London including a fringe meeting at the October 2021 BDC and a session at our 2022 Summer School.

A group from Congress met the Irish Ambassador to Colombia in 2022.

We also participated in "Colombia's Transitional Justice System: Reflections, Lesson-Sharing and Sustained Peace" in DFA in 2023.



Global Solidarity Summer School Sligo September 2022 Trade Unions for Peace.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Congress continues to seek to frame our work within the international framework agreed by the UN in 2015 – Agenda 2030. During the period, this included:

- We made a submission to DCCAE on the next government National SDG Implementation Plan in 2022
- Quote and a range of pictures of General Secretary sent into ITUC for their High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs campaign 2022 and a widely disseminating an ITUC tweet with General Secretary quote on implementation of SDGs
- Congress participated in the Global Workers' Digital Academy on Trade Union Actions on Sustainable Development and invited to an in-person follow up in the ILO training centre in Turin in May 2023
- Congress made a submission to government's consultation voluntary national review to be held at UN in July
- We had a meeting with DCCAE re SDG Champions programme
- Congress also liaised with the ITUC to set up a meeting with the Irish Ambassador to the UN in New York, in advance of their co-chairing (with Qatar) the September 2023 discussion on the SDGs.

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Congress is a founding member of The Irish Coalition for Business & Human Rights (ICBHR) and we were part of the launch of the campaign for corporate accountability legislation in Ireland in October 2021. This included:

- 'Make it Your Business' report launch
- Website for coalition at www.icbhr.org
- Video explaining impacts on communities' human rights and the environment
- A poll conducted by the ICBHR shows 81% of Irish people want legally binding regulations in Ireland for Irish companies acting unethically in low-income countries. Only 11% believe Irish companies should be able to self-regulate and apply their own standards
- Congress also met with the IUF and TUAC re the peer review of Irelands National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and submitted views via OECD questionnaire. The peer review team is made up of Norway, Spain and Czech Republic and met with us in October 2021. The review was published in 2022 and we are following up with the Department and TUAC regarding implementation of recommendations, including that of a stakeholder group to monitor and advise the national contact. point.



Other activities we undertook involved:

- We attended ITUC and ETUC network meetings on this topic with focus on mandatory human rights due diligence and the role of trade unions.
- Congress attended at DFA for the Implementation group of the national action plan on business and human rights.
- We published blog on state of play on Business and Human Rights on our website.
- We participated in Business and Human Rights National Action Plan implementation meeting in DFA.
- Part of Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights Delegation at meeting with DETE officials regarding the EU proposed Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.
- Submission to OECD on revision of the guidelines for multinational enterprises.

CLIMATE ACTION

The Global Solidarity Committee continues to follow international developments on climate action and to liaise closely with ITUC and ETUC on international initiatives.

In advance of COP26:

 Congress met with consultant undertaking a piece of work for Trócaire to identify key climate justice messages and concerns at COP26 to inform Irish civil society organisations engaging in Glasgow, and fed in trade union perspective

- We circulated a note on trade unions and COP26 and blog by chair of Global Solidarity Committee
- Congress met with organisers of the pre COP26 march here in Dublin on 6 November and agreed to circulate info on same
- Congress chaired an ITF session with transport unions on a Just Transition for transport sector and briefed the energy committee on COP26
- We continued to promote the ITUC Climate and Employment Proof our Workplaces campaign in Irish workplaces.

UKRAINE

Congress was shocked at the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and a Special Global Solidarity Committee meeting was held to discuss appropriate trade union response to the war in Ukraine. This culminated in the Executive Council organising a well-attended demonstration outside the Russian Embassy to mark the one-month anniversary of the illegal invasion along with a statement condemning the war and fund-raising efforts to assist the humanitarian response there and in neighbouring countries. Moneys raised went to the Irish Red Cross as well as the ITUC fund to support Ukrainian unions. We also ran a joint workplace fund with Ibec.





Patricia King and Ukrainian Ambassador 24 March 2022.

Congress also attended ITUC General Council meetings on the war resulting in the suspension of the Russian Federation – FNPR from the ITUC. Congress President, Kevin Callinan attended the ITUC Congress in Melbourne in November 2022 and a special session with the Ukrainian and Belarus unions.

Congress was also very proactive in providing solidarity with the independent trade union movement in Belarus (BKDP) who were effectively destroyed by the Lukashenko regime. We sent messages of solidarity from Congress to BKDP in Belarus and on social media and delivered a letter to Department of Foreign Affairs and promoted on social media.

Congress also spoke at an "Irish Left with Ukraine" public meeting in November 2022.



Stand with Ukraine Rally at Russian Embassy March 2022.

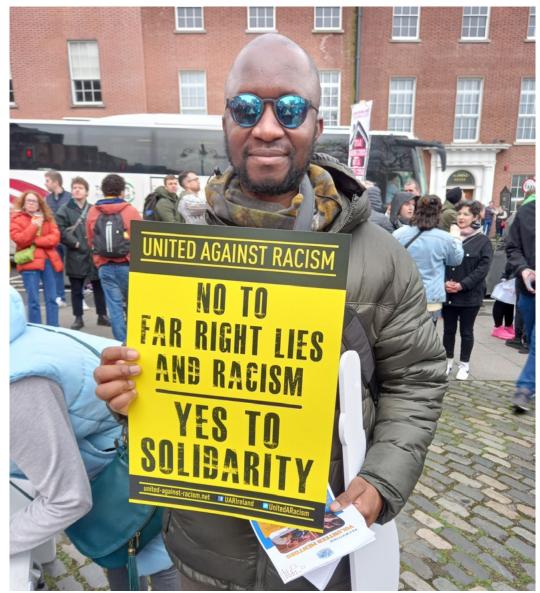


FAR RIGHT

In response to the increasing attempts by far-right elements to promote their hateful messages in local communities towards end of 2022 and into 2023, Congress revived our working group on tackling the far-right.

A statement was issued following the January Executive Council

meeting deploring the activities of extremists who are whipping up fears and anxieties by turning their hate on those seeking international protection in Ireland. The cynical use of socioeconomic challenges such as a lack of public services, housing, and the refugee crisis, by elements seeking to sew division and hate, and divide working people and local communities is unacceptable.



#IrelandforAll Rally 18 Feb 2023.



Congress President Kevin Callinan added that: "The best way to defeat the far-right is by delivering decent work, wages, rights, public services, and homes for all. In order to do that we must build solidarity and workers' power".

The trade union movement stands with refugees and international protection applicants and their representative organisations. We will continue to build solidarity between working people of all backgrounds and to work towards ensuring that the messages of the far-right never gain mainstream traction in our unions, communities, and workplaces.

The working group carried out a survey of trade union activity and support and received responses from 21 affiliated organisations.

Headline findings included:

- 52% have programmes on Far Right
- 57% on Racism
- And 95% planning initiatives on both

The sub-group continues to meet with following actions undertaken and planned:

Congress produced videos for social media - Basic message - "The farright doesn't represent working people, Trade Unions do."

Far Right Observatory bespoke online workshop for trade unions was held on 21 February 2023 on understanding and responding to anti-refugee protests.



Workers Support Refugees at Ireland for All Rally Feb 2023.

SECTION TWO

The Executive agreed to support the Ireland for All march on Saturday 18 February 2023 and to encourage trade union members who can do so to attend. This was a huge success as was a video highlighting trade union participation in the march.

The issue was also raised at LEEF meeting and the idea of a local task forces to counter far-right narrative, with involvement of local community, trade union and business leaders. The General Secretary following up with the Minister Roderic O'Gorman's advisers on this and participated in a meeting with the Minister and officials and other civil society groups in March to discuss how, in response to recent events, civil society might best work to support integration and tackle racism in Irish society. The Congress Executive Council adopted a plan of action to tackle the Far Right at their April 2023 meeting.

Congress also participated in a consultation by the independent anti-racism committee charged with developing a draft of the next national anti-racism strategy, finally launched in March 2023. Congress welcomed the employment initiatives outlined in the plan and stated that Congress was ready to play its part in these actions to ensure that inequality of outcomes for people experiencing racism in employment are addressed.

We look forward to cooperating with the soon to be appointed independent Special Rapporteur on Racial Equality and Racism who will monitor implementation of the plan.



Kevin Callinan Congress President addressing the media at Ireland for All Rally Feb 2023.

Other international related work included:

- Contact with MEPs regarding a vote in the European Parliament on Cuba
- Letter to Minister Coveney re closure of Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
- World Day for Decent Work statement widely disseminated
- Note on best ways to provide assistance to the Women and Girls of Afghanistan circulated



- Attended ETUC Trade Committee including discussions on sanctions against Myanmar military / also participated in IIEA webinar and asked a sanctions related question to the UN special envoy on Myanmar
- Participation in the ITUC
 Human and Trade Union Rights
 Committee meeting and their
 General Council meetings
- Hosted visit of executive committee of the South African Local government Bargaining Council – about 16 people composed of trade unionists and employers
- Participated in preparatory meeting for the annual trade union meeting with the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and liaised with Irish Aid on same
- Filled in ITUC Survey on ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 in action
- Participated in DFA Civil Society Human Rights Forum 2022
- Participated in DFA Civil Society Human Rights Committee meeting 25 May
- Chaired a session at IHREC's trafficking conference
- Met with Cuban Ambassador regarding their UN UPR review of their human rights record
- Met with Patrick Costello TD re CETA ruling November 2022

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, Prospect, Unite, Equity, Congress Youth committee, with nominations from other affiliates who were unable to attend in-person. The committee was reconstituted in 2021 and the committee is now led by Dooley Harte (Craigavon Trades Council) as Chair and Paddy Mackel (Belfast & District Trades Council) as vice-Chair.

The Committee has developed and has developed a work programme in co-operation with the allisland Congress Global Solidarity committee. Work with both committees is now more aligned, with NI-only unions now fully participating in meetings, seminars and actions. Dooley Harte is vice-chair of the Congress GS committee alongside Yvonne O'Callaghan as chair.

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY SUMMER SCHOOL

The 2022 Global Solidarity Summer School took place in-person in Sligo and was attended by over 70 delegates and expert speakers. The conference opened with a tribute to Eamon McMahon who died on the eve of the event. There were sessions on Climate Justice, Trade Unions



for Peace (featuring Colombian Senator Victoria Sandino), Hong Kong, Coalition 2030, Israel/Palestine, Kurdistan and global workers' rights.

The 2023 Global Solidarity Summer School will be held in Armagh City in late August 2023.

TRADE UNION FRIENDS OF PALESTINE (TUFP)

The TUFP Committee in the North meets every two months and is supported by a Steering Group which meets on alternative months and as required. The TUFP committee has continued to work with TUFP colleagues in the South on matters impacting across the whole island.

Over the past two years TUFP has continued to work on issues

including Apartheid Free Zones and BDS Europe including the Boycott HP Campaign, the European Trade Union Network's (ETUN) 'Don't Buy into Occupation' Campaign. During the year the committee made donations to the Land Defence Coalition and Palestine New Unions.

In 2021 work was undertaken with colleagues North and South to draw up and endorse a new Standing Orders for the TUFP Committees, which includes joint meetings as well as a commitment to collaborate on joint initiatives.

Another significant development has been the setting up of a Boycott Divestment and Sanction (BDS) Working Group by the Executive Council, which includes representatives from Congress as



TUFP and Unison hosted a special briefing on BDS in 2022. Credit: John O'Farrell'



well as the TUFP and Global Solidarity Committees North and South. This Working Group was tasked to consider how Congress could better support the BDS policy across affiliates and activists as well as in the wider community.

The BDS Working Group issued a survey of Congress Affiliates as well as engaging with colleagues across Europe to inform a paper which was presented to the Executive Council. At its July 2022 meeting, the Executive Council agreed all the recommendations from the BDS Working Group and the Report was launched at the Congress Global Solidarity Summer School in September 2022. The BDS Working Group will now focus on the implementation of all the recommendations.



Irish Anti Apartheid Campaign Launch.

SECTION

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Statement of Comprehensive Income	2022 €	2021 €	2020 €
INCOME			
Affiliation Fees Income Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment Grant and Project Income Activities Income Conference Income Other Income	2,302,427 852,523 40,133 181,295 46,043 3,206	2,340,033 865,941 7,100 282,773 37,779 7,695	2,268,935 900,000 32,379 225,433 16,403 5,984
	3,425,627	3,541,321	3,449,134
EXPENDITURE			
Staff Costs Ex-gratia Pensions Affiliation Fees Costs Education and Training Costs Activities Costs Research and Consulting Conferences and Meetings Publications, Printing and Stationery Grants and Subscriptions Repairs and Renewals Leasing of Office Equipment Motor, Travelling and Subsistence Insurance Rent, Rates and Service Charges Postage and Telephone Light and Heat Cleaning and Sundry Items Legal and Professional fees Bank Interest and Charges Loss/(Gain) on Foreign Exchange Loss/(Gain) on Disposal of Fixed Asset Depreciation Amortisation of Deferred Premises Funding	2,004,123 84,215 160,637 141,701 132,222 44,152 49,590 10,502 9,419 91,007 17,778 38,036 20,249 103,289 27,312 61,621 37,059 41,098 7,379 7,096 (1,568) 73,487 (33,255)	2,063,410 54,841 278,659 157,191 185,128 3,000 129,961 12,459 2,721 65,525 19,715 12,446 17,532 5,227 34,729 27,423 22,032 43,694 2,267 (38,317) 69,394 (33,255)	2,159,721 50,341 240,095 166,799 91,934 3,032 30,719 8,798 3,023 78,204 20,248 17,045 14,698 99,064 28,003 31,424 28,233 71,303 1,320 20,857
	3,127,152	3,215,781	3,186,712
Operating Surplus for the Year	298,475	325,540	262,422



	€	€	€
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	1,805,240	_1,844,877	1,862,693
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and Cash Equivalents Debtors and Prepayments Stock of Stationery	598,149 2,517	•	421,688 5,034
CREDITORS: (amounts falling due within one year)			
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	(1,601,351)	(1,258,857)	(1,354,406)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	1,506,251	1,201,394	891,294

CREDITORS: (amounts falling due after more than one year)

Deferred Premises funding	(831,377)	(864,632)	(897,888)
NET ASSETS	2,480,114	2,181,639	1,856,099

RESERVES

	2,480,114	2,181,639	1,856,099
Campaign Fund	865,103	865,103	865,103
General Reserve	1,615,011	1,316,536	990,996

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

APPENDIX 2

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

The Executive Council held 17 ordinary meetings between November 2021 and April 2023.

The attendances at these meetings were as follows:

Member	Number of Meetings
	Attended
Kevin Callinan, President	15
Phil Ní Shéaghdha, Vice-President	16
Justin McCamphill, Vice-President	16
Joe Cunningham, Treasurer	13
John Boyle, INTO	16
Richie Browne, Unite	7
Ethel Buckley, SIPTU	17
Kieran Christie, ASTI	17
John Clinton, POA	13
Séamus Dooley, NUJ	11
Carmel Gates, NIPSA	13
Michael Gillespie, TUI	15
Bernard Harbor, Forsa	12
Frank Jones, IFUT	17
Paddy Kavanagh, Connect	13
John King, SIPTU	14
Gerry Light, Mandate	14
Erin Massey, CWU UK	6
Edward Matthews, INMO	16
Katie Morgan, Forsa	17
Gerry Murphy, INTO	13
Gerry McCormack, SIPTU	9
Séan McDonagh, CWU	13
Patricia McKeown, UNISON	6
Brian Nolan, Connect	14
Fíonnuala Ní Bhrógáin, CWU	13



John O'Connell, FSU	11
Deirdre O'Connor, INTO	14
Jackie Pollock, Unite	7
Ciaran Rohan, AHCPS	15
Eoin Ronayne, Forsa	12
Bryan Smyth, NIPSA	5
Kieran Smyth, USDAW	5
Anne Speed, UNISON	15
Betty Tyrrell-Collard, Trades Council Rep	14
Ronan Sharkey (Youth Observer) **	11
Jimmy Whelan (Retired Workers Observer) *	11

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The General Purposes Committee held 16 Ordinary meetings between December 2021 and April 2023.

Name	Number of Meetings Attended
Kevin Callinan, President	16
Phil Ní Shéaghdha, Vice-President	15
Justin McCamphill, Vice-President	15
Joe Cunningham, Treasurer	14
John Boyle, INTO	13
Katie Morgan, Forsa	15
Gerry Murphy, INTO	8
Gerry McCormack, SIPTU	11
John O'Connell, FSU	14

^{*} J Whelan was elected as Retired Workers' Committee Observer in February 2022.

^{**} R Sharkey was elected Youth Committee Observer to the Executive Council in March 2022.



NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE

The Northern Ireland Committee's Biennial Delegate Conference took place on the 22/23 November 2022 and the following were elected as members of the Committee:

J P Clayton (UNISON), H Crickard (TC), D Crilly (NIPSA), M Galloway (RWC), C Gates (NIPSA), P Mackel (UCU), A Marshall (YC), E Massey (CWU UK), G Matthews (PCS), J McCamphill (NASUWT), P McKeown (UNISON), N McNally (SIPTU), A Moffatt (PROSPECT/BECTU), G Murphy (INTO), R Neal (USDAW), J Pollock (UNITE), J Quinn (FBU), T Trainor(UNITE), D Walker (GMB), J White (UTU).

OBITUARIES

We lost a number of colleagues, staff and activists of individual trade unions since BDC 2021, including,

John McAdam, SIPTU, who died September 2022.

Eamon McMahon was a giant of solidarity with the people of Palestine – a founder of Trade Union Friends of Palestine and the European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine and member of the Congress Global Solidarity Committee, who died September 2022.

Jim Eadie, Irish Secretary of the NUJ and a former member of the Congress Executive Council, who died December 2022.

Fr. Michael McGreil, a former member and President of the Kildare Trades Council and Kildare Resource Centres, who died January 2023.

Our Congress colleague Joan O'Connell who worked in Congress Head Office in the 70s, 80s and early 90's, who died January 2023.

Aileen Atcheson, Secretary of the Clonmel Trades and Labour Council and member of the Congress Women's Committee, who died February 2023.

Pamela Dooley, Head of Organising & Development UNISON, former member of the Congress Executive Committee and various Congress Committees, who died April 2023.



Michael O'Halloran (1937-2023)

Michael O'Halloran was deeply commitment to the labour movement during all his adult life. He began his trade union involvement as an apprentice baker in Boland's Bakery and as a member of what was then the Irish Bakers, Confectioners and Allied Workers Amalgamated Union. He later became a young activist in that union where he was inspired, and mentored, by John Swift the legendary Baker's union leader.



He was appointed Training Officer in Congress in 1969 and was given the onerous task of developing, from scratch, training for shop stewards. He succeeded in developed an excellent curriculum and having it delivered throughout the country. He tirelessly lobbied employers and government for paid educational leave for worker representatives. He will be remembered fondly by thousands who benefited from his tuition, advice and ever cheerful kindness.

He also contributed to the broader labour movement through his involvement in the Labour Party. As an elected councillor, he represented his local Artane electoral area on Dublin City Council from 1979 until 1991. He was particularly honoured and proud to be elected Lord Mayor in 1984-5 and was a popular and distinguished first citizen of his native city. Following his retirement from Congress in1997, he continued to represent working people, within the Retired Workers' Committee, and subsequently as Chief Executive of the Senior Citizens Parliament. He also served two terms as a well-respected and influential member of the Pensions Board.

On behalf of the Executive Council, Congress wishes to extend its deepest sympathy to his family.

The Exectuive Council would like to offer its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the deceased.



APPENDIX 3

UNIONS AFFILIATED TO CONGRESS 2023

(Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2022)

RO Regional Officer/Office IS Irish Secretary R Republic of Ireland NS **National Secretary** NΙ Northern Ireland RS Regional Secretary НО **Head Office** NO National Official **General Secretary** Chief Executive Officer GS CEO IR Irish Representative SNO Senior Negotiating Officer W **Area Secretary** Women AS NO National Organiser NIO Northern Ireland Officer PO = Policy/Political Officer SO Senior Organiser Ireland

President NO National Organiser Ρ

D Director

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants	R NI Total W R	3617 0 3617 1843	GS	Ciaran Rohan Flemings Hall, 12 Flemings Place, Dublin 4 Telephone: 01-6686077 Email: info@ahcps.ie
Association of Irish Traditional Musicians	R NI Total WR WNI	163 0 163 79 0	GS	Pádraig Ó Ceallaigh 32 Cearnóg Belgrave Square, Monkstown, Co. Dublin Telephone: 01-2800295 Email: <u>eolas@comhaltas.ie</u>
Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland	R NI Total W R	18157 0 18157 12640	GS	Kieran Christie ASTI, Thomas McDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01-6040160 Email: info@asti.ie

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union	R NI Total W R W NI	0 470 470 0 78	NI	Sarah Woolley Stanborough House, Great North Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 7TA Telephone: 0044 17 0726 0150 Email: info@bfawu.org Laura Graham Auxiliary Organsing 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
Building and Allied Trades Union	R NI Total W R	2641 0 2641 1	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 1684	D	Claire Sullivan 3rd Floor South Chancery Exchange 10 Furnival Street London EC4A1AB Telephone: 0044 20 7306 6666 Email: sullivanc@csp.org.uk
Communications Workers' Union	R NI Total W R	15001 0 15001 3596	GS	Seán 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 5269 5269 999	GS RS	Dave Ward CWU, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX Telephone: 0044 2089717251 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 140	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	1202 0 1202 741	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 WNI	0 503 503 0 254	GS	Paul W Fleming Guild House, Upper St. Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EG Telephone: 0044 20 7379 6000 Email: info@equity.org.uk Alice Adams Lemon Northern Ireland National Official Email: alemon@equity.org.uk
Financial Services Union	R NI Total W R W NI	7110 2035 9145 4704 1335	GS	John O'Connell 1 Stephen Street Upper, Dublin 8, D08DR9P Telephone: 01-475 5908 Email: info@fsunion.org
Fire Brigades' Union	R NI Total WNI	0 1514 1514 118	GS RO	Matt Wrack 14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT28 1XJ Telephone: 0044 20 8541 1765 Email: office@fbu.org.uk 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)	R NI Total WNI	0 371 371 205	GS NO	David Penman 93-95 Borough High Street, London SE1 7NL Telephone 0044 20 7401 5555 Email: dave@fda.org.uk Allan Sampson 46 Moray Place Edinburgh EH3 6BH Telephone: 0044 13 1226 4708 Email: allan@fda.org.uk
FÓRSA	R NI Total WR WNI	89401 0 89401 61601 0	GS	Kevin Callinan General Secretary Nerney's Court, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8171500 Email: kcallinan@forsa.ie
GMB	R NI Total WR WNI	49 9790 9839 21 4828	GS SOI	Gary Smith Victoria House ,1 A Victoria Road Holywood BT18 9BA Telephone: 0044 15 1727 0077 Denise Walker Victoria House ,1 A Victoria Road Holywood BT18 9BA Telephone: 0044 28 9039 3347 Email: denise.walker@gmb.org.uk
Guinness Staff Union	R NI Total W R	283 0 283 102	GS	Jason Palmer GSU, The Guinness Enterprise Centre Taylors Lane, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01-4100600 Email: jason.palmer@guinnessstaffunion. com
Irish Federation of University Teachers	R NI Total W R	2258 0 2258 1154	GS	Frank Jones 11 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, D02 P962 Telephone: 01- 661 0910 Email: generalsecretary@ifut.ie
Irish Medical Organisation	R NI Total W R W NI	6082 0 6082 3772 0	CEO	Susan Clyne Chief Executive Officer 10 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2, D02 Y322 Telephone: 01- 676 7273 Email: sclyne@imo.ie



Irish National Teachers' Organisation	R NI Total W R W NI	43788 7085 50873 37293 5581	GS NS	John Boyle 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1 D01 ET35 Telephone: 01-8047700 Email: info@into.ie Mark McTaggart 23-24 College Gardens Belfast BT9 6BS Telephone: 0044 7590 833 605 Email: mmctaggart@into.ie
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation	R NI Total W R	43868 0 43868 41432	GS	Phil Ní Sheaghdha The Whitworth Building, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Telephone: 01-6640600 Email: inmo@inmo.ie
MANDATE	R NI Total W R	24815 0 24815 17370	GS	Gerry Light O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8746321 Email: mandate@mandate.ie
Medical Laboratory Scientists Association	R NI Total W R	2209 0 2209 1798	GS	Terry Casey 4th Floor, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1,D01 E5Y3 Telephone: 01-8586472 Email: tcasey@siptu.ie
National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)	R NI Total WR WNI	0 761 761 0 Not available	GS	Paul Whiteman General Secretary NAHT Carnmoney House Edgewater office Park Belfast BT3 9JQ Telephone: 0044 28 9077 6633 Email: nahtni@naht.org.uk Millbank Tower 21-24 Millbank London SW1P 4QP Telephone: 0044 03 0030 30333 Email: info@naht.org.uk





Operative Plasterers and Allied Trades Society of Ireland	R NI Total W R	918 0 918	GS	Barry Murphy 77 Camden Street Lower, Dublin 2 Email: info@opatsi.ie
The Pharmacists Defence Association (PDA)	R NI Total W NI	0 1022 1022 742	GS	John Murphy Old Fire Station 69 Albion Street Birmingham B1 3EA Telephone: 0044 12 1694 7000 Email: paul.day@pda-union.org
Prison Officers' Association	R NI Total W R	3166 0 3166 689	GS	Karl Dalton 18 Merrion Square Dublin 2, D02E126 Telephone: 01-6625495 Email: admin@poa.ie KarlDalton@poa.ie
Prison Officers' Association UK	R NI Total W R W NI	0 926 926 0 287	GS AS	Steve Gillan Cronin House, 245 Church Street, Edmonton, London N99HW Telephone: 0044 20 8803 0255 Email: general@poauk.org.uk June Robinson Castell House 116 Ballywalter Road Millisle Co Down BT22 2HS Telephone: 0044 28 9186 1928 Email: adminni@poauk.org.uk
Prospect	R NI Total W R W NI	44 2313 2357 13 445	GS NI	Mike Clancy 8 Leake Street, New Prospect House, London SE1 8NN Telephone: 0044 03 0060 01878 Angela Moffatt Prospect Northern Ireland/ Republic of Ireland c/o ICTU NIC, 45-47 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FG Telephone: 0044 28 9024 6331 Email: ni@prospect.org.uk





Ulster Teachers' Union	R NI Total W R W NI	39 5378 5417 30 4601	GS	Jacquie White 94 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5HP Telephone: 0044 28 9066 2216 Email: office@utu.edu
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers	R NI Total W NI	0 14434 14434 8092	GS	Paddy Lillis Voyager Building 2 Furness Quay Salford Quays, Manchester M503XZ Telephone: 0044 16 1224 2804 Email: paddy.lillis@usdaw.org.uk
UNISON	R NI Total W R W NI	25 42075 42100 20 34336	GS IR	Christina McAnea Unison Centre 130 Euston Road London NW1 2AY Telephone: 0044 20 7121 5151 Email: c.mcanea@unison.co.uk Patricia McKeown Galway House 165 York Street Belfast BT15 1AL Telephone: 0044 28 9027 0190 Email: p.mckeown@unison.co.uk
UNITE	R NI Total W R W NI	18895 34279 53174 6010 8398	RS R	Sharon Graham 128 Theobald's Road Holborn London WC1X 8TN Telephone: 0044 20 7611 2500 Email: Sharon.graham@unitetheunion.org Susan Fitzgerald Regional Secretary 26-34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AA Telephone: 0044 28 9023 2381 Email: susan/.fitzgerald@unitetheunion.org 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



University & College Union	R NI Total WNI	0 3035 3035 1715	GS NIO	Jo Grady Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH Telephone: 0044 20 7756 2500 Email: jgrady@ucu.org.uk Katharine Clarke Suite 1, Shaftesbury House Edgewater Road Belfast BT3 9JQ Telephone: 0044 28 9037 2870 Email: kclarke@ucu.org.uk
Veterinary Ireland	R NI Total W	1095 0 1095 289	GS	Finbarr Murphy 13, The Courtyard Kilcarbery Park Nangor Road Dublin 22, D22 XH05 Telephone: 01-457 7976 Email: hq@vetireland.ie
Veterinary Officers' Association	R NI Total W	363 0 363 169	GS	Tom Hantey Fleming's Hall 12 Fleming's Place Dublin 4 Telephone: 01-668 6077 Email: donala.omahony@agriculture.gov. ie

UNIONS WITH ASSOCIATE STATUS AFFILIATED TO CONGRESS 2023 (Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2022)

Name of Union		Number of Members		Contact/Address
Aegis The Union	R NI Total WR WNI	0 76 76 0 46	НО	Brian Linn General Secretary Aegon South Gyle Edinburgh Park Edinburgh EH12 9SE Telephone: 0044 77 1812 2850 Email: brian.linn@aegistheunion.co.uk



British Dietetic Association	R NI Total WR WNI	81 433 514 75 411	НО	Andy Burman 3rd Floor Interchange Place 151-165 Edmund Street Birmingham B3 2TA Telephone: 0044 12 1200 8080 Email: tusecretary@bda.uk.com
Community	R NI Total W R WNI	0 150 150 0 60	НО	Roy Rickhuss General Secretary Community 465c Caledonian Road Lower Halloway London N7 9GX Telephone: 0044 20 7420 4000 Email: lmurrell@community-tu.org
Hospital Consultants and Specialist Association	R NI Total WR WNI	0 101 101 0 22	НО	Dr Paul Donaldson 1 Kingsclere Road Overton Basingstoke Hants RG25 3JA Telephone: 0044 12 5677 1777 Email: conspec@hcsa.com
Permanent Defence Force (PDFORRA)	R NI Total WR WNI	6042 0 6042 Not available	НО	Gerard Guinan General Secretary John Lucey House Collins Square Benburb Street Dublin 7 Telephone: 01-6712430 Email: HQ@PDFORRA.IE
RACO	R NI Total WR WNI	1190 0 1190 139 0	НО	Conor King Unit 12 4075 Kingswood Road City West Business Campus Dublin 24 Telephone: 01-4133324 Email: info@raco.ie
Royal College of Podiatry	R NI Total WR WNI	85 457 542 67 345	НО	Mark Sargeant Acting General Secretary 2nd Floor, Quartz House 207 Providence Square Mill Street, London SE1 2EW Telephone: 0044 20 7707 84858 Email: employmentsupport@rcpod.org.uk

AFFILIATIONS TO CONGRESS

Currently there are 46 unions affiliated to Congress and 7 Associate Members.

LOCAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS AFFILIATED TO CONGRESS 2023

(Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2022)

Ballymena and Antrim District Trades Union Council

Belfast and District Trades Council

Bray and District Council of Trade Unions

Castlebar and District Trades Council

Clonmel Trades and Labour Council

Cork Council of Trade Unions

Craigavon and District Council of Trade Unions

Derry Trades Union Council

Dublin Council of Trade Unions

Fermanagh Trades Union Council

Galway Council of Trade Unions

Kildare Council of Trade Unions

Kilkenny Council of Trade Unions

Letterkenny and District Trades Council

Limerick Council of Trade Unions

Meath Council of Trade Unions

Mid - Ulster Trades Union Council

North Down and Ards Trades Council

Sligo and Leitrim Trades Council

Waterford Council of Trade Unions

Wexford Council of Trade Unions



CONGRESS CENTRES NETWORK

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 2FG0

Ph: 04890-961111

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 Flevation F

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

11A2 Mastertech Business Park Athlone Road Longford

Ph: 043-3347515

Mullingar Congress Information & Development Centre

Unit B, Habour 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

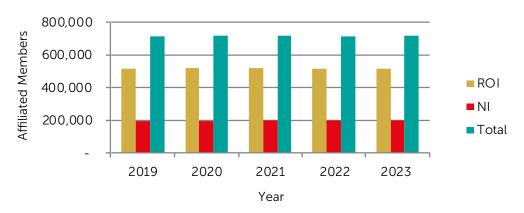
The number of union members affiliated to Congress as at 31st December 2022 stood at 716,970 compared to 713,854 in 2019, a marginal increase of 3,116 over the period.

The number of unions affiliated to Congress for 2023 is 46, with a further 6 unions with associate status.

SUMMARY OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 2019 TO 2023

Year	ROI	NI	Total
2019	517,830	196,024	713,854
2020	522,372	196,950	719,322
2021	521,004	198,981	719,985
2022	515,757	198,086	713,843
2023	517,307	199,663	716,970
Change	- 523	3,639	3,116
% Change	-0.10%	1.84%	0.44%

5 YEAR TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

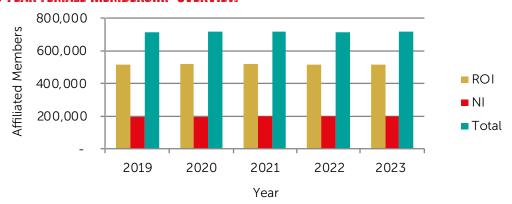


SUMMARY OF FEMALE MEMBERSHIP 2019 TO 2023

Year	ROI	NI	Total
2019	273,201	116,159	389,360
2020	274,556	116,340	390,896
2021	278,545	114,701	393,246
2022	277,137	118,425	395,562
2023	278,341	118,579	396,920
Change	5,140	2,420	7,560
% Change	1.88%	2.08%	1.94%



5 YEAR FEMALE MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW



Public / Private 2023		2023	2021		
	Members	%	Members	%	
Total Membership	716,970		719,985		
Total Private Sector	315,135	43.95%	326,502	45.35%	
Total Public Sector	401,835	56.05%	393,483	54.65%	
Total ROI	517,307		521,004		
ROI Private Sector	250,695	48.46%	256,982	49.32%	
ROI Public Sector	266,612	51.54%	264,022	50.68%	
Total NI	199,663		198,981		
NI Private Sector	64,440	32.27%	69,520	34.94%	
NI Public Sector	135,223	67.73%	129,461	65.06%	
Public / Private Female 2023		2023		2021	
	Members	%	Members	%	
Total Female	396,920		393,246		
Total Female Private Sector	120,296	30.31%	128,940	32.79%	
Total Female Public Sector	276,624	69.69%	264,306	67.21%	
Total Female as % Total Membership	55.36%		54.62%		
Total ROI Female	278,341		278,545		
ROI Private Sector Female	94,916	34.10%	101,665	36.50%	
ROI Public Sector Female	183,425	65.90%	176,880	63.50%	
Total NI Female	118,579		114,701		
NI Private Sector Female	25,380	21.40%	27,275	23.78%	
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APPENDIX 4

STAFF AT CONGRESS 2023

(as of May 2023)

Head Office

31-32 Parnell Square Dublin 1 (D01 YR92)

T: +353 1 8897777

Northern Ireland Office

45-47 Donegall Street Belfast BT1 2FG

T: 048 9024 7940

Congress Head Office

General Secretary – Owen Reidy

Assistant General Secretary – Gerry Murphy

Industrial Officer – Liam Berney

Equality and International Officer – David Joyce

Campaigns Officer – Macdara Doyle

Programme Manager | Senior Administrator – Deirdre Mannion

Social Policy Officer – Laura Bambrick Social Policy Officer – Ger Gibbons

Communications Consultant – Conor Kavanagh

Finance Officer – Liam Daly

ONE Initiative/Trades Council Network – Eoin Ronayne, Special Projects Officer (Fórsa)

Administrative Staff

General Secretary's Office – Natalie Higgins

Finance Office – 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 NI – 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

Economist – Chris Smart

Event Manager/Administrator – Louisa O'Brien

Belfast Office

Co-Director – Paul MacFlynn

Senior Economist – Lisa Wilson

Congress Secretariat Changes

Left Congress

Patricia King, General Secretary September 2022

Catherine McLoughlin *January 2022*

Pat Quinn (career break) February 2022

Fiona Dunne September 2022

Joined Congress

Gerry Murphy, Assistant General Secretary NI *March 2023*

Notes

On behalf of the Executive Council, Congress wishes to extend best wishes to those who have left or joined Congress since BDC 2021.

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

F Connolly (SIPTU), K Dalton (POA), S Dooley (NUJ), F Dunne (FÒRSA), C Gallagher (INTO), D Gibney (MANDATE), A Klemm (UNITE), B McDowell (FSU), S De Paor (INMO), N Shanahan (FÒRSA), G Tuffy (ASTI), I Wall (CWU).

COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMITTEE

M Brehony (INMO), B Carr (SIPTU), L Coffey (FÒRSA), A Connolly (FÒRSA), T Martin (FÒRSA), K Morgan (FÒRSA), A Murphy (INMO), K O'Loughlin (SIPTU).

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

T Faulkner (CONNECT), T Fitzgerald (UNITE), A Kane (SIPTU), J McCabe (UNITE), A McGuinness (SIPTU), B Murphy (OPATSI), B Nolan (CONNECT), B O'Sullivan (BATU), J Regan (SIPTU), A Smith (BATU), C Whelan (BATU).

DISABILITY COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

D Boggs (NASUWT), C Bowles (NASUWT), P Brennan (SIPTU), J Cunningham (GMB), C Darcan (PCS), J Fee (CWU), G Matthews (PCS), A McCann (GMB), W Mulholland (SIPTU), A Smyth (UNITE), A Sweetlove (UNISON), M Trimble (UNISON).

DISABILITY COMMITTEE (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

E Billane (SIPTU), M Branigan (UNITE), M Clarke (IFUT), M Coughlan (BTC), C Dennis (UNITE), M Diskin (BTC), M Ennis (FSU), A Flynn (IFUT), M Gallagher (FSU), S Gaynor, J Hanna (SIPTU), C Kavanagh (FÒRSA), A Kelly (INMO), S Lahart (TUI), G Looney (TUI), M Madden (FÒRSA), S Murphy (INTO), G O'Brien (ASTI), D O'Connor (INTO), D de Paor (ASTI), S Pitman (INMO), P Power (SIPTU), M Quinn (SIPTU), U NiRiain (DCTU), V Savage (FÒRSA), C Scheffer (CWU), J Thomas (WTC), M Whyte (INMO).

EDUCATION SECTOR GROUP

B Byrne (UNITE), K Byrne (SIPTU), A Dolan (TUI), S Griffin (FÓRSA), F Jones (IFUT), A Kane (SIPTU), M Leydon (ASTI), A Mullen (INTO), A Pike (FÓRSA), M Hamilton (IFUT).



EDUCATION TRADE UNION GROUP

K Doherty (GMB), J Donley (GMB), K Ellison (UNITE), G Gault (NAHT), H Greer (NAHT), M Murphy Higgins (NASUWT), M Keenan (UNITE), A Law (NIPSA), C McCarthy (INTO), S McCord (UTU), H McKinstry (UNISON), M McTaggart (INTO), P Mulholland (NIPSA), L O'Hara (UNISON), A Patterson (NASUWT), L Poutney (NAHT), A Speed (UNISON), A Steen (UTU), A Wallace (NASUWT), J Wyglendacz (UTU).

ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES SECTORAL GROUP

R Browne (ESB GOU), L Culinan (ESU), J Dullaghan (UNITE), D Erangey (CONNECT), S Heading (CONNECT), A Kelly (ESU), D Lane (SIPTU), P Mooney (UNITE), E Murphy (SIPTU), W Noone (SIPTU), J O'Dowd (UNITE), F O'Neill (ESU), E Thompson (UNITE).

EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

J Patrick Clayton (UNISON), P McKeown (UNISON).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TACKLING THE FAR RIGHT

S Dooley (NUJ), R McCord (UNITE), Y O'Callaghan (SIPTU), E Ronayne (FÓRSA), A Speed (UNISON).

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

N Adams (INMO), J Bowen (CTC), M Brennan (FÒRSA), M Byrne (WCTU), F Connolly (SIPTU), M Connor (INMO), M Coughlan (BTC), C Donoghue (UNITE), M Dowling (KTC), E Fox (MANDATE), D Gibney (MANDATE), C Godkin (UNITE), A Kenny (KTC), G Kerr (INTO), M Leydon (ASTI), J McCrohan (FÒRSA), N McGuirk (FÒRSA), C Melinn (CWU), K Miskella (WCTU), J O'Brien (INTO), M O'Brien (SIPTU), Y O'Callaghan (SIPTU), M O'Connor (ESU), T O'Connor (TUI), K O'Hara (ESU), K O'Malley (FÒRSA), A Piggott (ASTI), J Roche (TUI), A Seely (SIPTU), T Simpson (DCTU), M Smyth (FÒRSA), B Stacey (UNITE), P Torsney (CWU), M Wall (WCTU), A Wilkinson (LTC).

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

G Alexander (NIPSA), L Collins (Mid Ulster TC), P Corrigan (Amnesty International NI), K Daly (INTO), R Gilpin (UTU), D Harte (CTC), K Hillick (UNISON), P Mackel (BTC), C McCarthy (UNISON), A McKee (EQUITY), R Miotti (NASUST), S McLaughlin (USDAW), C Ni Cathail (TUFP), C Mullaly (PROSPECT), G O'Fachtna (SIPTU), J Scott (NIPSA).



HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

G Alexander (NIPSA), R Beggs (NASUWT), P Fox (GMB), E J Cullen (UNISON), S Dix (EQUITY), S Doherty (CWU UK), M Loughran (NIPSA), G Matthews (PCS), B Morgan (NASUWT), C Morgan (FSU), R Rafferty (UNISON), K Sweeney (CWU UK), P Turner (B &D TC).

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

F Barry (UNITE), M Brehony (INMO), R Byrnes (TUI), L Coffey (FÒRSA), N Cooper (INTO), S Cronin (SIPTU), D Daly (FÒRSA), J Doran (CONNECT), K Eccles (INMO), O Henry (FSU), D Hughes (INMO), R Jordan (INTO), P Kenny (CWU), J Irwin (TUI), D MacDonald (ASTI), J McCamley (SIPTU), J McCarthy (SIPTU), C McDonald (ASTI), A McGuinness (SIPTU), M Meegan (MANDATE), M Morrison (POA), A Murphy (INMO), M Murphy (OPATSI), B O'Leary (SIPTU), N O'Mahony (FÒRSA), M Quinn (SIPTU), D Robinson (FÒRSA), K Ryan (POA), A Smith (BATU), C Walsh (ESU).

HEALTH SECTOR GROUP

K Figgis (SIPTU), T Fitzpatrick (INMO), D Hughes (INMO), A Murphy (INMO), P NíSheaghdha (INMO), A Owens (IMO).

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

J Bremmer (HCSA),S Brophy (GMB), J P Clayton (UNISON), J Donley (GMB), S Keir (BDA), T Killen (NIPSA), K McAdam (UNITE), C McCarthy (UNISON), B McCreight (HCSA), M McKenna (UNISON), D Moorehead (UNITE), K Murray (RCM), G O'Dwyer (COP), U O'Farrell (PDA), C Pullar (MIP), R Raffney (UNISON), C Regan (SOR), C Ronald (CSP), A Speed (UNISON), T Sullivan (CSP), T Thomas (NIPSA), A Wilson (RCM).

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

J Boyle (INTO), R Browne (UNITE), E Buckley (SIPTU), K Callinan (FÓRSA), K Christie (ASTI), J Clinton (POA), J Cunningham (SIPTU), S Dooley (NUJ), M Gillespie (TUI), B Harbor (FÓRSA), F Jones (IFUT), P Kavanagh (CONNECT), J King (SIPTU), G Light (MANDATE), E Matthews (INMO), G McCormack (SIPTU), S McDonagh (CWU), K Morgan (FÓRSA), P Ni Sheaghdha (INMO), F Ní Bhrógáin (CWU), B Nolan (CONNECT), J O'Connell (FSU), D O'Connor (INTO), C Rohan (AHCPS), E Ronayne (FÓRSA), B Tyrrell Collard (DCTU).

LEGAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE

A Dolan (TUI), F Lee (IFUT), G Light (MANDATE), E Matthews (INMO), M McHenry (INTO), L Monaghan (INMO), G Murphy (FSU), D O'Connor (INTO), E Ronayne (FÓRSA), R Ryan (SIPTU).

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

M Ashby (FSU), S Carmichael (CWU UK), A Dickson (UNISON), S Fitzner (NIPSA), P Guy (GMB), H Hannaway (EQUITY), S Lambe (NASUWT), A Lynas (NASUWT), A Murray (NIPSA), D Trowlen (SIPTU).

NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE

J P Clayton (UNISON), H Crickard (TC), D Crilly (NIPSA), M Galloway (RWC), C Gates (NIPSA), P Mackel (UCU), A Marshall (YC), E Massey (CWU UK), G Matthews (PCS), J McCamphill (NASUWT), P McKeown (UNISON), N McNally (SIPTU), A Moffatt (PROSPECT/BECTU), G Murphy (INTO), R Neal (USDAW), J Pollock (UNITE), J Quinn (FBU), T Trainor(UNITE), D Walker (GMB), J White (UTU).

NORTH SOUTH COMMITTEE

J Boyle (INTO), K Callinan (FÓRSA), J P Clayton (UNISON), C Gates (NIPSA), F Jones (IFUT), G Light (MANDATE), P Mackel (UCU), J McCamphill (NASUWT), G McCormack (SIPTU), P McKeown (UNISON), K Morgan (FÓRSA), G Murphy (INTO), P Ní Sheaghdha (INMO), J O'Connell (FSU), J Pollock (UNITE), A Speed (UNISON), T Trainor (UNITE), D Walker (GMB).

PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITTEE

B Barrett (FSU), P Burns (UNITE), K Callinan (FÓRSA), S Dooley (NUJ), G Ennis (SIPTU), T Fitzgerald (UNITE), T Hannick (SIPTU), S Heading (CONNECT), J Hogan (MANDATE), P Kavanagh (CONNECT), D Keane (FÓRSA), G Light (MANDATE), I McArdle (CWU), G McCormack (SIPTU), K Morgan (FÓRSA), G Murphy (FSU), F Ni Bhrogain (CWU), B Nolan (CONNECT Trade Union), L O'Brien (MANDATE), J Palmer (GSU), P Rodgers (UNITE).

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

J Boyle (INTO), K Callinan (FÓRSA), T Casey (MLSA), K Christie (ASTI), S Clyne (IMO), K Dalton (POA), T Fitzgerald (UNITE), M Gillespie (TUI), G Guinan (PDFORRA), F Jones (IFUT), P Kavanagh (CONNECT), C King (RACO), J King (SIPTU), B Murphy (OPATSI), F Murphy (VI), P Ní Sheaghdha (INMO), B O'Sullivan (BATU), C Rohan (AHCPS).

RETAIL & DISTRIBUTION SECTORAL GROUP

G Brash (UNITE), G Light (MANDATE), P Macklin (GMB), N McNally (SIPTU), D Sheridan (SIPTU), N Scarborough (USDAW).



RETIRED WORKERS COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

R Atkinson (UTU), A Boorman (UNISON), T Cluskey (NIPSA), S Dodds (NIPSA), M Galloway (PCS), T Gillen (SIPTU), F Hughes (PCS), J Hughes (FBU), L Huston (CWU UK), D Lee (UNITE), J Ley (NUJ), P Magee (GMB), J Martin (CWU UK), H Rafferty (UNITE), A Thompson (UNITE).

RETIRED WORKERS COMMITTEE (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

J Brady (IFUT), M Browne (FSU), M Casey (UNITE), J Dunne (WCTU), F Farrell (UNITE), B Fitzpatrick (AHCPS), B Burke (FÓRSA), J Foley (FÓRSA), D Griffin (UNITE), J Guinan (CWU), T Hickey (IFUT), J Higgins (CWU), M Hoye (TUI), M Humphries (TUI), D Keane (TUI), P Lamon (SIPTU), J J MacLoughlin (SIPTU), M MacGuinness (INMO), M Moynihan (BTC), H Murphy (SIPTU), J Nealon (FÓRSA), D O'Boyle (ASTI), G O'Donoghue (ASTI), D Ronan (INMO), T Roche (WCTU), B Sheehan (INTO), D Sheridan (FSU), A Walsh (AHCPS), A Walsh (FÓRSA), J Walsh (SIPTU), J Whelan (UNITE).

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

J Gaffney (MANDATE), C Kelly (UNITE), F Hourihane (UNITE), J McGinley (SIPTU).

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

G Alexander (NIPSA), J Bartley (NAHT), D Collins (CWU), T Creaney (NIPSA),D Crilly (B&D TC), C Darcan (PSC), E Gorman (FSU), M Hampton (EQUITY), M M Higgins (NASUWT), G Matthews (PCS), D McCusker (UNISON), A McVicker (B&D TC), E Mooney (NAHT), W Mulholland (SIPTU), N Murphy (GMB), K O'Dowd (UNITE), L O'Hagan (B&AD TC), S Rees (NASUWT), C Ronald (CSP), T Trainor (UNITE), D Yapicioz (UNISON).

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

A Atcheston (CTC), M Branigan (UNITE), M Brennan (FÓRSA), M Coughlan (BCTU), C Corcoran (ESU), B Tyrrell Collard (DCTC), M Dalton (BDTC), A Donlon (SIPTU), C Farrar (NUJ), E Fitzgerald (INMO), J Flood (FÓRSA), J Gaffney (MANDATE), J Geraghty (FSU), C Godkin (UNITE), N Grealy (INTO), D Guinan (TSSA), R Hartery (SIPTU), A Healy (ASTI), V Keenan (TUI), M LaCombre (FSU), F Lee (IFUT), M Leydon (ASTI), G Looney (CTU), H Linehan (FÓRSA), M McCafferty (INTO), K McGowan (IMNO), T Moloney (DCTU), E Moore (CWU), A Mulcahy (TUI), A Mullen (INTO), T Murphy (DCTU), T Murphy (ESU), B Neville (WTC), B O'Leary (MLSA), A Ryan (SIPTU), C Scheffer (CWU), I Scully (SIPTU), B Stenson (INMO), J Taylor (FÓRSA), A Wilkinson (LTC),

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

YOUTH COMMITTEE (NORTHERN IRELAND)

A Marshall (NIPSA), David Mulholland (NIPSA), Ronan Sharkey (NASUWT).

YOUTH COMMITTEE (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND)

M Byrne (WTC), T Clare (INTO), A Dowling (TUI), L Gallagher (INTO), D Horan (UNITE), D Howard (ASTI), E Mitchell (SIPTU), L Mullen (INTO), L NíShúilleábhain, A O'Connor (UNITE), C O'Connor (SIPTU), Lisa O'Donoghue (TUI), J Pringle (MANDATE), S Ryan (SIPTU).

BODIES ON WHICH CONGRESS IS REPRESENTED

Republic of Ireland

Industrial Relations

- Advisory Group- Better Balance for Better Business
- Company Law Review Group
- Courts Services Board
- **Expert Group on Future Skills**
- Labour Court
- LEEF Plenary Group
- LEEF Sub-group Aviation
- LEEF Sub-group Childcare
- LEEF Sub-group Employment Rights
- LEEF Sub-group Employment Rights
- LEEF Sub-group on Pensions
- Legal Practitioner Disciplinary Tribunal
- Low Pay Commission
- National Apprenticeship Alliance
- Private Security Authority
- Uisce Éireann/The Public Water Authority
- Working Group on Employment
- 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
- DCEDIY Anti-Racism Committee
- DCEDIY National Women's Strategy Monitoring Group
- DFA Standing Committee on Human Rights
- DFA Business and Human Rights Implementation Group
- Employment sub-group of National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy
- Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) 2021-2027 Monitoring Committee
- IHREC Future of Equality Legislation Advisory Committee

- IHREC Worker Employer Advisory Committee
- Labour Market Advisory Council and its sub-committee on the evaluation of public employment schemes.
- Migrant Integration Strategy Monitoring and Coordination Committee
- National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy Committee
- Social Welfare Tribunal
- Technical Advisory Group on Social Welfare

Other Bodies

- Advisory Committee for the Coordination 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
- Coalition 2030
- Construction Workers Benevolent Fund & Construction Workers Health Trust
- Construction Workers Pensions Scheme
- Expert Group of the Nursing Profession
- Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights
- National Safeguarding Committee
- Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC)
- Retail Consultation Forum
- Retirement Planning Council of Ireland
- Shannon Group PLC

UNIONS TRANSFORMING WORK AND WORKPLACES

International Bodies

- Advisory Committee on Vocational Training
- Advisory Committee on Migrant Workers Social Welfare
- CEDEFOP government Board
- EU Domestic Advisory Group on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and **Working Conditions**
- ETUC Executive
- ETUC Standing Committees
- EU Social Dialogue Committee
- EU Expert Group on Transposition of Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages
- EU Advisory Committee on Freedom of Movement of Workers
- EUROFOUND
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) Working Group
- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) General Council - Substitute Member
- The European Social Fund (ESF)
- Trade Union Advisory Council to the OECD (TUAC).

APPENDIX 6

ACTION ON MOTIONS TO BDC 2021

1. FAIR EMPLOYMENT FOR TEACHERS (NASUWT)

This matter was raised at the NI Assembly Education Committee, and with the main political parties ahead of May elections to NI Assembly so that it could be included in their manifestos.

2. POST BREXIT AND IMPACT ON WORKERS (PCS)

Congress continues to provide training and information on employment rights to migrant workers, and Congress works closely with the Migrant Centre and Belfast City of Sanctuary. A Congress group has been established to work to challenge racism and the emerging influence of the Far Right. We have also developed an action plan endorsed by the Executive Council in April 2023 on tackling racism and the rise of the far-right.

3. PROTECTING THE PEACE AGREEMENT (UNISON)

Congress has engaged with victims and survivor groups in particular WAVE trauma and wider civic society and has campaigned against the UK government proposals and

demanded the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement. We also continue to work with the other UK Trade Union Centres on this issue.

4. PROTECT RETAIL WORKERS FROM ABUSE (USDAW)

Congress engaged with our affiliate USDAW on this matter and sought to ensure that this issue was discussed and raised at the NI Executive sponsored High Street Taskforce.

Motions 5 & 6 Combined

BUILDING A STRONGER TU MOVEMENT IN IRELAND AND RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN (FÓRSA & ASTI)

In January 2022 a series of meetings were arranged with affiliated unions to discuss their views on some of the recommendations of the Commission on the Irish Trade Union Movement, in particular their attitude to co-operation amongst unions in the area of organising. The outcome of these meetings formed part of a detailed report that was presented to the Executive Council in February 2022. The positive response received from affiliates will inform a planned public relations campaign on union membership and collective activism. Tenders for this campaign have been sought from public relations and marketing companies with the successful company to be identified in May 2023.



7. 1998 BELFAST GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT (WATERFORD CTU)

The objectives of this motion has been prioritised by the General Purposes Committee and is a key part of the work of the recently revamped Congress North/South Committee since March 2023. Progress is being monitored under a Shared Island standing agenda item at the Congress General Purposes Committee and Executive Council. At time of writing the North/South Committee subcommittee are working on trade union event to commemorate the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

8. LOCAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATION (WEXFORD CTU)

ONE Cork and ONE Galway had their first in-person meetings in early 2022 during which they continued to work on their previously agreed agenda (details can be found in Executive Council Report Section 2). The Trades Council Network (TCN) met monthly online during 2021 and 2022 and continued to grow and exchange ideas and working projects. The Trades Council audit began in March 2022 with the final report submitted to the officers of Congress in August 2022 with a series of key recommendations. Discussion took place over a six-month period with unions in Meath to establish a new Trades Council which had its inaugural meeting in March 2022. Although Covid stalled the work of the LTUC group, collaborations continue, and the Wexford LTUC was opened in early April 2023.

9. MOTION OF CENSURE (FERMANAGH CTU)

This motion was ruled Out of Order by the Standing Orders Committee.

10. NO GOING BACK - TOWARDS SAFE & SECURE FUTURE FOR ALL (EXECUTIVE CUINCIL

The ambition in the 2020 No Going Back - Towards a safe and secure future for all paper is as relevant today as it was in May 2020. We see this paper as our trade union manifesto for the next decade. Every 2/3 years we intend to compile a report/an update on progress made on these issues. The first such review was published in June 2023.

11. BANKING AND FINANCIAL MATTERS (FSU)

Congress liaised with FSU on this who preferred, in the first instance, to work directly with the Department of Finance on the issue. FSU were also appointed to the Banking Forum set up by the Department of Finance to deal with these issues.

12. PUBLIC PROCUREMENT/ APPRENTICESHIPS (OPATSI)

Congress continued to campaign and lobby for the wider availability of apprenticeship opportunities in publicly procured construction projects and in the wider public service. The government 'Action Plan on Apprenticeships' targeted a minimum of 700 apprenticeship opportunities in the public sector in each year of the plan, however at the time of writing this report this target had not been reached in any year.



Motions 13/14/15/21. Combined

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL)

The High-Level Group on Collective Bargaining issued its report in September 2022. The Adequate Minimum Wages Directive was ratified in November 2022 and all member states have two years to transpose same into national law. We have made it clear to government in the LEEF process that the legislation for the HLG report and the correct transposition of the directive are the top trade union priorities. We held a seminar in April 2023 on the future of collective bargaining where over 80 organisers and officials from a range of affiliates came together to look at both initiatives paving the way for a unified trade union movement position on both. The HLG report will be dealt with in the LEEF Employment Rights subcommittee and the directive separately but in parallel.

16. EQUALITY (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL)

This motion reflects the ongoing work of Congress and Affiliates in protecting and promoting human rights and equality on the island of Ireland and in building a culture of respect for human rights and equality in our workplaces and trade unions. It is reported on in detail in that section of the Executive Council report. Significantly, Congress played a leading role in ensuring that the ILO Convention on violence and harassment in the world of work has now been ratified in Ireland and the UK.

17. THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE FUTURE OF WORK (SIPTU)

Work is underway to co-ordinate a trade union response to the challenges posed by Fourth Revolution and actively create alliances throughout civil society with groups that share our values and goals on issues such as a fair transition to a zero-carbon economy, digitalised future for workers. The work of the Energy Sector Committee is reported to the Executive Council on a monthly basis.

18 & 19. BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT (CONNECT & NUJ (UK & IRELAND))

Congress continued its campaign on Bogus Self Employment with a view to achieving a robust legal framework to protect workers. As part of the campaign the government agreed to establish a Working Group to look at this issue. It is expected that the Working Group will report in the second half of 2023. The Working Group will have particular regard to the potential impact of a proposed EU Directive on Improving Working Conditions in Platform Work.

20. AUTOMATION (UNITE)

The strategic assessment of the potential impact of automation on the labour market and its implications for bargaining strategies is due for completion in June 2023.



22. SUPPORT FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (EQUITY)

Congress has worked closely with affiliates with members in the creative arts. Congress was instrumental in persuading government in the Republic of Ireland to put in place a pilot 'basic income scheme' for actors and continues to lobby to achieve the objectives of the motion.

23. TREATMENT OF SEAFARERS IN THE PANDEMIC (RMT)

This motion fell.

24. END THE THREATS AND ABUSE TO PUBLIC SERVICES STAFF (RCM)

Congress worked with the RCM to ensure this matter was raised appropriately by both the Congress NIC Health Committee and considered by the Health and Safety Committee. We are also worked with the Labour Relations Agency to develop guidance on workplace harassment and we have organised webinars with ECNI and LRA on dignity at work. We continue to work with the RCM through the NI Health and Safety Committee to develop a policy to protect staff from abuse and to seek to influence the NI Executive and employers on the matter.

25. A NEW DEAL FOR RETAIL AND DISTRIBUTION WORKERS (MANDATE)

The Retail Group has continued its work on a North/South basis and has agreed key priorities for 2023/2024. The current focus of the campaign is on rebuilding membership levels and on securing the creation of a stakeholder Retail Sector Forum for Northern Ireland, akin to the Forum that exists in the Republic in Ireland.

26. REMOTE WORKING (GSU)

In January 2022 government published the Right to Request Remote Working Bill. The publication of the Bill led to a high-profile crossunion campaign. The Congress 'Make Remote Work!' policy paper highlighted the fundamental flaws in the proposed legislation. Through the LEEF sub-group on Employment Rights Congress suggested the right to request remote should be included in the Work Life Balance Bill. This Bill, which includes a provision on the right to request remote working was signed into law in March 2023. Congress is part of a working group developing a WRC Code of Practice to support the proper implementation of this new workers' right.



27. APPRENTICESHIPS (CONNECT)

Congress continues to press for the implementation of the objectives of this motion in the context of the ongoing dialogue with the Department of Further and Higher Education on the implementation of the government Action Plan on Apprenticeship. We also raised the issue of Apprenticeships at a LEEF Plenary meeting chaired by the Taoiseach.

28 & 29. HOUSING/CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC HOUSING TO BE BUILT ON PUBLIC LAND (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL & WATERFORD CTU

The Raise the Roof Housing Campaign was refreshed post-Covid and held a very successful series of regional meetings (five) across the country in May-July 2022, a further series of public meetings (five) in Dublin in Sept-Oct 2022 followed by a major national rally on 26 November 2022. A further series of public events are to be held in 2023/2024.

30. PUBLIC POLICY LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL)

Congress continued to press for the achievement of the objectives in the motion through our work on lobbying for the adoption of the 'No Going Back' Policy document. A review, by Congress, of the 'No Going Back' policy document is underway at time of writing.

31. NO GOING BACK - TU DEMANDS FOR A RIGHTS BASED SOCIETY (UNISON)

Congress continues to campaign for the full realisation of the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement and works closely with a range of civil society organisations and coalitions to amplify this message. It is planned to organise an event to mark the 25th anniversary of the agreement. Proper engagement with the NI Executive continues to be part of the core work of the Congress Northern Ireland Committee. Congress continues to work with other civil society groups to support multi annual budgets for the NI Executive. We continue to campaign for the introduction of a Bill of Rights and other provisions to ensure the we can advance the socio-economic interests of workers in society.

32. FOOD POVERTY AND INSECURITY (GMB)

This matter was raised at the NI Assembly Education Committee, and with the main political parties ahead of elections to NI Assembly so that it could be included in their manifestos.

33. ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL)

This work is integrated into the work of the Global Solidarity Committee. Congress has written to Irish Aid regrading support for the work internationally and has continued its engagement with the Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights, the ETUC and ITUC on the promotion of mandatory human rights due diligence for companies.



34 & 35. CUBA/SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA (CORK CTU & BELFAST CTU)

This work is coordinated by the Global Solidarity Committee.
Congress has written to the Minister for Foreign Affairs seeking Ireland's continued support for international efforts to end the blockade. Congress also issued a statement calling on Irish MEPs to oppose a motion being proposed by a number of right-wing MEPs, condemning Cuba for alleged "human rights abuses" arising out of demonstrations there in July 2021. We have also met with Ambassador Guanche on these matters on a number of occasions.

36 & 37. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR/JUST TRANSITION/CLIMATE CHANGE (PROSPECT & NIPSA)

Congress has liaised with Prospect and the Energy Sector Group ROI and are working to establish an Energy Sector Group in NI with intention of having the group up and running by July 2023.

38. DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY (TUI)

Congress succeeded in having Trade Union representatives appointed to the relevant Sectoral Committees in Higher Education.

39. INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION (INTO)

Congress to prioritise education resourcing in its pre-Budget processes.

40. SAFE NURSE AND MIDWIFERY STAFFING LEVELS AND SKILLS IN ALL AREAS OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES (INMO)

Congress continues to support our affiliates with nurse members to ensure the achievement of the objectives of this motion.

41. YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH (BRAY CTU)

This work was integrated into the Disability Committee agenda and was included in pre-budget submissions from Congress.

42. OUT-SOURCING/EXTERNAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE (GALWAY CTU)

The Public Service Pay Agreement provides for a process of detailed engagement with unions on any plans for the outsourcing of work that is proper to the public service. Congress has continued to assist unions to use utilise these provisions to the resist widespread outsourcing of public services.



Congress continues to campaign for the adequate funding of essential public services. Congress recognises the rapidly changing environment for An Post and will continue to support our affiliates with members in An Post.

44. KEY ROLE OF FURTHER & HIGHER EDUCATION SECTORS IN COVID 19 RECOVERY (UCU)

The objectives of this motion were pursued through the work of the Congress Northern Ireland Committee on Education.

45. HEALTH SERVICE NORTH AND SOUTH (BELFAST CTU)

The objectives of this motion continue to be pursued through the work of the Congress Health Sector Committees in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

46. INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR PHARMACISTS (PDA)

The PDA fully engaged in work of NI Health committee, and received assistance with first ever ballot for industrial action in March 2023.

47. A UNIVERSITY FOR DERRY (DERRY CTU)

The Northern Ireland Committee will work with the Derry Trades Union Council to lobby Stormont on to secure a University for Derry. Congress has also lobbied the Irish government, through the Shared Island Unit to achieve the objectives of this motion.

EM1. RELEASE OF MR SAAB VENEZUELAN DIPLOMAT BY US (CORK CTU)

Congress wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs seeking that they call on the US authorities to immediately release Mr. Saab and that the Irish government publicly condemn this grossly illegal act by the USA and use any influence possible to seek his release.



NOTES





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