

How will the political parties **Make Their Mark** for the Equality and Human Rights Infrastructure?

Here is an outline of the four main parties manifesto commitments regarding the equality and human rights infrastructure¹

	Greens	Labour	Sinn Fein	Fianna Fail	Fine Gael
Statements on Equality/human rights	‘The erosion of Ireland’s equality infrastructure in recent times has been a matter of great concern to the Green Party. The Green Party believes that these organisations are vital components working to ensure that equality and human rights standards in this country do not slip’	‘Equality is not a luxury for the good times or a buzz word: it is at the heart of what it means to be a citizen in our democracy, and it is at the heart of the Labour Party’s view of the world. Labour believes that everyone has the right to reach their full potential, free from discrimination, and that we all benefit from living in a more equal society.’ And ‘Fianna Fáil systematically filleted state bodies which	‘The current system is not fit for purpose. It has brought us ‘boom/bust’ economics and has failed to create a fair society where there is genuine equality of opportunity and outcome’ And ‘Sinn Féin fought hard for the equality and human rights protections introduced as a consequence of the Good Friday Agreement and we will continue to press for the fulfilment of the principle of equivalence in	No	No

¹ The manifestos of the Labour Party, the Green Party and Sinn Fein make a number of other commitments to addressing inequality and poverty that are not included here. This analysis is focused on commitments made regarding the equality and human rights infrastructure

		criticised its record on equality, human rights and poverty. The Labour Party will put fairness and equality back at the heart of government decision-making.'	human rights and equality protections between the Six Counties and 26 Counties and for their continual improvement'		
Introduce Positive duties for public sector organisations	Amend equality legislation to include a duty on public sector organisations to have due regard to equality and human rights in carrying out their functions and to implement positive action measures to achieve full equality in practice in employment and service provision.	No	A statutory duty to equality-proof all law and policy including budgets to promote equality at least equivalent to that operates in the Six Counties	No	We will encourage all public bodies to take due note to equality and human rights in carrying out their functions
Introduce Positive duties for private sector organisations	Amend equality legislation to include a duty on private sector organisations to be planned and systematic in their approach to equality	No	No	No	No

Introduce socio-economic status ground in equality legislation	Explore expanding the nine grounds of discrimination to include socio economic status	No	No	No	No
Establish an Oireachtas Committee on Equality, Human rights & women's rights	Provide for the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission to be accountable to an Oireachtas Committee on Equality and Human Rights, in order to strengthen their independence	Labour will establish an Oireachtas Committee on Equality, Women and Human Rights, charged with progressing legislation in these areas.	Establish an Oireachtas Committee on Equality and Human Rights to monitor implementation of our new equality and human rights laws.	No	No
Accountability of bodies to the Oireachtas	Provide for the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission to be accountable to an Oireachtas Committee on Equality and Human Rights, in order to strengthen their independence.	No	All State boards to be answerable to the Oireachtas through relevant committees and ministers with transparency and efficiency in decision-making.	No	No ²

² While the FG election manifesto does not contain a commitment to make the Equality Authority and the IHRC accountable to the Oireachtas, FG has given a commitment to make these agencies accountable to the Oireachtas in their 'New Politics' document (pg 34 2 (a))

<p>-Reconstitution of EA</p> <p>-IHRC as stand alone body</p> <p>-Funding to bodies</p>	<p>Protect the Equality Authority and the Irish Human Rights Commission from further funding cuts, and explore the possibility of reinstating 2008 levels of funding to these organisations</p>	<p>A new Equality and Social Inclusion Authority with a mandate to promote social inclusion and equality, and combat poverty and discrimination, will replace the Equality Authority and the National Disability Authority. It will incorporate the policy and research functions of the Combat Poverty Agency, which was dismantled by Fianna Fáil.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Irish Human Rights Commission remains as a stand-alone body. Expand the Equality Authority to address poverty, and ensure that appointments to the boards of both organisations are through an open and transparent process.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Review system of appointments to State boards</p>	<p>Implement administrative process by which Ministers and/or the Oireachtas can advertise publicly for vacancies for nominations (to State Boards).</p>	<p>Appointment to boards must be based on a demonstrable capacity to do the job. Labour intends to start this process immediately. To that end, the Labour Party will reserve the right to seek the resignation of all those appointed to State Boards since 22 November 2010..... Oireachtas committees will</p>	<p>End political appointments to State boards – there needs to be an open and transparent system of appointments to State bodies</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>

		consider the suitability of nominated candidates, including having candidates appear before the committee, and it will be a condition of appointment that board members appear before committees as required.			
Ratify outstanding human rights conventions	<p>The Green Party will work with coalition partners to ratify the following conventions and protocols:</p> <p>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.</p>	No	No	No	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

	<p>International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.</p> <p>Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.</p> <p>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.</p>				
Other amendments to equality legislation	No	<p>Labour will amend Section 37 of the Employment Equality Acts (1998) and (2004)</p> <p>Labour will also amend the Employment Equality Act to combat age discrimination by shifting the burden of proof to the employer as to why an individual must</p>	No	No	No

		retire on age grounds.			
National strategies to promote equality & human rights	<p>Publish the National Carers Strategy</p> <p>Full implementation of the National Women's Strategy</p> <p>Publish a Positive Ageing Strategy</p>	<p>Completion and publication of the Carers Strategy.</p> <p>Complete and publish a new national anti-poverty strategy.</p> <p>Committed to progressing the implementation of a National Positive Ageing Strategy.</p> <p>Advance implementation of the National Disability Strategy.</p>	<p>Publish a National Carers' Strategy.</p> <p>A new 'Equality Strategy' that draws together previously fragmented strategies to eliminate discrimination and introduce real equality</p> <p>An all-Ireland 'Strategy for Women's Equality'.</p>	No	No