

LAW SOCIETY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Centre of Excellence for
Professional Education and Lifelong Learning



ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY CONFERENCE 2019

International Protection and the experience of Direct Provision: best practice and future reform

Date	12 October 2019
Time	10.00am to 2.00pm
Venue	President's Hall, Law Society of Ireland, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7
Fee	Complimentary
CPD Hours	3 General (by Group Study)
Event Code	19031

Aim and Objectives

This conference is organised by the Law Society Human Rights and Equality Committee in partnership with Law Society Professional Training, with the aim of bringing together legal practitioners, members of the judiciary, members of the public, as well as academics, policy makers, human rights and civil society organisations to explore issues around the international process in Ireland and the far-reaching impact of direct provision. An extensive panel discussion and question and answer session will take place following the plenary sessions.

The aim of this year's conference is to critically explore the operation of the international protection process in Ireland and the impact of direct provision upon asylum seekers. There will also be an examination of international best practice examples in the area, including the significance of the UN Global Compact for Migration – the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. The Conference offers a vital opportunity for policymakers and other interested stakeholders to come together to assess and discuss the various issues and challenges involved in navigating this area. It will also provide scope to highlight the rights considerations around same and to consider opportunities for future reform. It is an aim of the Conference to stimulate and invigorate debate amongst key stakeholders in this area and mobilise necessary change.

The Annual Human Rights Conference Series

This year marks the 17th anniversary of the Law Society's Human Rights Committee Annual Conference series. The principal aim of the conference series is to promote awareness of human rights law and practice among both lawyers and the public, and also to encourage consideration of how human rights can be promoted and protected.

Topics and Issues to be Covered

- Overview of the international protection process in Ireland
- Identifying key human rights challenges and considerations in the protection process
- International best practice and lessons learned
- Exploring opportunities for change and future reform in international protection in Ireland

Chairpersons

Shane McCarthy, Chairperson of the Law Society Human Rights and Equality Committee.

Shane McCarthy is a Council member of the Law Society of Ireland and serves as Chair of the Human Rights Committee as well as being a member of the Criminal Law Committee.

Hilkka Becker, Chairperson of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

Hilkka Becker is the Chairperson of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal since April 2017. She was previously Deputy Chairperson of the Tribunal and served as a part-time Member of the Tribunal's predecessor, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, for a period of three years from 2013 to 2016. She is a lawyer with over 20 years professional experience specialising in asylum, migration and human rights law. She registered to practice in Germany in 1998 and was admitted to the roll of solicitors in Ireland in 2003. Hilkka was senior solicitor at the Immigrant Council of Ireland Independent Law Centre for over 10 years, up to March 2015. She is a former Regional Legal Advisor with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Vienna and provided consultancy services for the IOM in Western Balkan states, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iraq. She previously worked as a private solicitor and as legal officer with the Irish Refugee Council. She has also acted as a national expert on projects managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the European Network of Experts on Free Movement of Workers within the European Union and the EU Democracy Observatory on Citizenship (EUODO) and is a member of the Advisory Committee of the European Network on Statelessness (ENS), the Irish Women Lawyers' Association (IWLA) and of the Law Society's Human Rights and Equality Committee.

Speakers

The Honorable Mr. Justice Bryan McMahon, Chair of the Working Group on Direct Provision and the Protection Process.

Having taken a B.C.L. and an LL.B. from UCD, Dr. Bryan McMahon was admitted as a solicitor in 1964. He was awarded a fellowship to Harvard Law School, and graduated with the LL.M. in 1965. Dr McMahon was awarded his PhD in 1972 from NUI. Having spent 20 years as a full-time academic in University College, Cork, Dr McMahon joined the Ennis firm of Houlihan McMahon in 1986. Simultaneously, he held a part-time chair at National University of Ireland Galway. Over the years he has held a number of academic positions at home and abroad and has lectured extensively on legal topics in Europe and the USA. He is widely published and is co-author of Irish Law of Torts and European Law in Ireland. He was also, over the years, Chair of the National Crime Forum, The Irish Universities Quality Board, Chair of Registrar's Committee, EQAR (Brussels) and the National Archives Advisory Council. In 1999, Dr McMahon was appointed a Judge of the Circuit Court and retired from the High Court on April 8th, 2011. In 2005, Dr McMahon was appointed Chairman of the Abbey Theatre a position he held until 2016. He was Chairman of the Governing Body of University College, Cork from 2013-2015. He has chaired two national referendum commissions. In 2012 Dr McMahon was appointed as Presiding Officer for the new Irish Citizenship Ceremonies, and was awarded an honorary doctorate (LLD) by UCD in the same year. Dr McMahon was appointed Chair of the Working Group established by the Government in November 2014, to Recommend Improvements to Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers. The Report was submitted to the Government in June 2015.

H.E. Ambassador David Donoghue, Special Envoy for the UN Security Council

Campaign.

Born in Dublin in 1952, Ambassador David Donoghue had a long and varied career in Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs. He was involved for many years in the Northern Ireland peace process. He was one of the Irish Government's negotiators for the ground-breaking Good Friday Agreement (1998), which has provided a political framework for lasting peace and stability in Northern Ireland. Ambassador Donoghue served at different times as the Irish Ambassador to Russia, Austria and Germany. From 2001-4 he was the Director General of Ireland's development co-operation programme, today known as Irish Aid, and oversaw in this capacity a programme growing significantly in budget allocation and thematic and geographic range. He also served as Political Director from 2009-13, a post which gave him responsibility for Ireland's overall foreign policy. From 2013-17 Ambassador Donoghue was the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations in New York. At the request of the President of the General Assembly, he served as co-facilitator (with Kenya) for the UN negotiations which led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. He also served as co-facilitator (with Jordan) for the negotiations which produced the New York Declaration on large movements of refugees and migrants, adopted at a special summit in September 2016. Ambassador Donoghue retired from the Irish foreign service in September 2017. Since then he has been actively involved with issues relating to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to follow-up to the New York Declaration and the related Global Compacts on Migrants and Refugees. He is contributing to the work of a number of think-tanks and academic institutions on these issues and also on issues around conflict prevention and resolution. He is, inter alia, a Distinguished Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute and the Chairman of the Board of Conciliation Resources.

Grainne O' Hara, Director of Division of International Protection, UNHCR.

Ms. O'Hara is an Irish national. She holds a law degree from Trinity College Dublin and was called to the Bar in Ireland in 1992. After two years of service with the Free Legal Advice Centres in Dublin she opted for an international career and joined UNHCR in 1994 as a United Nations Volunteer. In 24 years with UNHCR she has served in a variety of functions and operational settings spanning a wide range of protection related responsibilities. Her postings have included: Mexico; FYROM; Kosovo; Burundi; Sudan; the Caribbean; the United States of America; Afghanistan; Syria; Iraq and Jordan. She took up her current assignment as Director of the Division of International Protection on 1 June 2018 following a preceding stint as Deputy Director at UNHCR's Office in New York.

Minister David Stanton, Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration.

David Stanton was appointed Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality in May 2016. His areas of responsibility include- Equality, Integration, Reception and Integration Agency, Irish Refugee Protection Programme, Ireland's reporting requirements on human rights issues, Youth Justice policy, Gambling control, Firearms Legislation and EU Funds Administration. David was previously Chairperson of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, and is currently a member of the All-Party Sub-Committee on Dáil Reform. Prior to becoming a public representative, David was a second level school teacher and career guidance counsellor, which included home school community liaison. David holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematical Science and Sociology, Diplomas in Career Guidance and Counselling, Education Administration and a Masters in Education. He is also a former Commissioned Officer in the Army Reserve.

Elle Kisyombe, Founder, Our Table.

Elle Kisyombe is a mother, activist, and political candidate. She is a chef and Co-Founder and Director of Our Table. Originally from Malawi, Ellie had been seeking asylum in Ireland for almost a decade and in July 2019 was granted residency. In 2015 Ellie established Our Table, a non-profit that helps refugees and asylum seekers gain skills and employment. Our Table fights to end the harmful system of Direct Provision through the celebration of food and culture. Our Table has seen a number of successes including winning The Irish Cafe Awards, establishing a cafe in Christchurch Cathedral and launching its own range of Hot Sauces and Hummus. In 2016 Ellie was in an award winning radio drama 'Flight Risk'. In 2018 she featured as part of Dublin City Council Culture Company's 'Local Heroes'.

**Irish Institute of Training & Development – Multiple Award Winners
Awarded for Excellence & Innovation in Training & Development**