



European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland

Press Statement - for immediate release

18th June 2018

Contact: Irene Byrne 087 7914782

“EAPN Ireland calls for the immediate inclusion of socio-economic status as grounds for discrimination”

The European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland is calling for the Irish government to show its full and immediate support for the inclusion of socio-economic status as an additional ground for discrimination under current Irish equality legislation.

The ground will ensure that those who have experienced discrimination and exclusion based on their housing status, address, income level, and family background, will have necessary redress under equality legislation. The Central Statistics Office revealed that 29.6% of those reporting discrimination have stated it was on grounds other than those covered in the current legislation, with strong indication that “other grounds” relate to income status and location or address.

EAPN Ireland notes the significant move in European countries towards extending the mandate of equality bodies to cover socio-economic status grounds. An overview of equality legislation, revealed that legislation in 20 of the 35 European countries represented in a European Commission report, provide protection against discrimination on a ground related to socio-economic status.

EAPN Ireland believes the government concerns around the inclusion of socio-economic status, on the basis of necessity and impact, are unfounded. EAPN Ireland director Paul Ginnell states *“socio-economic status does not present a burden greater than existing grounds already operating within current legislation.”*

He went on to say, *“The extensive research being called for by the government in order to establish levels and locations of discrimination, as well as to further explore definitions, is heavy handed and ignores the experiences and learning already in place around equality legislation in Ireland and within other European jurisdictions.”*

EAPN Ireland believes the move to include socio-economic status as grounds for discrimination would not bring Ireland beyond the point of necessity or create unintended consequences, but would instead align Irish law with the majority of jurisdictions in the EU, ensuring Ireland remains at the forefront of protecting the rights of its citizens to freely access services and seek work, unburdened by discriminatory attitudes, behaviours, and prejudices.

Notes:

- **European Anti-Poverty Network, Ireland** is a network of groups and individuals working against poverty. It is the Irish national network of the **European Anti-Poverty Network** ([EAPN Europe](#)), which has two decades of experience in lobbying for progressive social change across Europe.
- EAPN Ireland is made up of over two hundred local, regional and national anti-poverty organisations and individuals. EAPN Ireland supports members to influence national and European policy through training, information, collective action and networking.

