



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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Government supports legislation to allow members of non-religious bodies to perform civil marriages

Following the introduction of a Private Members Bill by Senator Ivana Bacik last year, the Government today (*Tuesday, 1st May 2012*) agreed to support legislation to allow members of non-religious groups to perform civil marriages.

Commenting on this development, Minister Burton said: **"I would like to commend Senator Bacik on her initiative in bringing this Bill before the Seanad. The key impact of the Bill, which seeks to amend the Civil Registration Act 2004, will be to allow members of non-religious bodies, such as members of the Humanist Association of Ireland, to be entitled to perform legal civil marriages. My officials have been working with the Senator to bring this to fruition."**

The Civil Registration Act, 2004 provides for a register of solemnisers, who may be either registrars employed by the HSE or members of religious bodies, who are authorised under law to solemnise marriages in the State. This Bill seeks to introduce a third category of solemniser - a solemniser who is neither a registrar employed by the HSE or a member of a religious body.

It is proposed that the Bill will amend the definitions contained in section 45 of the Civil Registration Act, 2004 to provide for applications from philosophical and non-confessional bodies, provided they fulfil certain criteria.

These criteria are:-

- (a) that the body in question has been performing marriage ceremonies for at least five years;
- (b) at least twenty couples have participated in marriage ceremonies;
- (c) these marriage have been solemnised and registered in the State register;
and
- (d) at least one of these marriages has been registered at least five years before the date of the application to the Registrar General.

In order to progress the Bill, it must be passed by the Seanad and it can then be sponsored by Minister Burton in the Dáil. At that stage, the Bill will be submitted to Government for approval to proceed and it will be referred to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel in the usual manner.

Minister Burton concluded by saying: **"The proposal to include members of non-religious bodies in the register of solemnisers is one I support and I am delighted to have obtained the support of my colleagues in Cabinet for the proposal today"**.

Note: A list of bodies who are currently authorised under law to solemnise marriages in the State follows.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

**Register of bodies authorised to solemnise marriages include the following
(this list is also available at www.groireland.ie)**

7th Day Adventist Church
Abundant Grace Christian Assembly
Abundant Life Christian Centre
Amish Mennonite Community Ltd
Arann Reformed Baptist Church
Armenian Orthodox Church
Assemblies of God Ireland
Association of Independent Christian Churches
Baha'i Community
Bantry Christian Fellowship
Baptist Church
Blanchardstown Baptist Church
Bridgetown Gospel Hall
Buddhist
Calvary Chapel Cork
Calvary Church Wexford
Calvary Ireland
Carlow Bible Church
Chinese Gospel Church
Christ Healing Evangelical Church
Christian Brethren
Church of Ireland
Church Of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints
Congregational Union of Ireland
Cootehill Christian Fellowships
Cornerstone Christian Church
Donnybrook Church
Donnybrook Pentecostal Church
Dublin West Community Ch
Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church
Elim Ministries
Ennis Evangelical Church
Free Presbyterian Church
Gorey Christian Assembly
Grace Christian Fellowship
Grace Fellowship
Great Hope Gospel Ministries
Greek Orthodox Church
Healing Streams Christian Renewal Centre
The Redeemed Christian Church of God
Hillside Evangelical Church
Hope and Glory Christian Ministries
Islamic Community
JC of LDS
Jehovahs Witnesses
Jewish Community
Kingdom Dominion Christian Church Limited
Knocklyon Church of Christ
Lifegate Bible Baptist Church
Life Renewal Ministries International

Listowel Christian Fellowship
Lurganearly Hall
Lutheran Church
Mallow Street Christian Fellowship
Methodist Church
Monaghan Gospel Hall
Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries
Mountain View Community Church
Mullingar Christian Fellowship
Nazarene Community Church
Newbridge Bible Fellowship Church
Newcastle West Bible Fellowship
New Life International Ministries
North Down Christian Fellowship Church
Oratory Society
Order of Marian Apostles
Pagan Federation Ireland
Plumblin Ministries
Presbyterian Church
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
Religious Society Of Friends
Riverside Gospel Hall
Roman Catholic Church
Romanian Orthodox Church
Shanganagh Bible Church (Plymouth Brethern)
Society of St Pius X
Solid Rock Church of God
Soul Winning Pentecostal Ministries
South City Church
South Hill Evangelical Church
Spiritualist Union of Ireland
The Association of Independent Christian Churches
The Bride Christian Fellowship
The First Six Principle Baptist Church of Ireland
The Gospel Hall Skibbereen
The Lighthouse Baptist Church
The Oratory Society
The Redeemed Christian Church of God
The Redeemed Church of God
The Salvation Army
The Society of St. Pius X
Tower of Power International Ministries
Tralee Christian Fellowship Church
Tramore Bible Church
Transfiguration Christian Centre
Trinity Church Network
Unitarian Church
Victory Christian Church
Victory Outreach Church
Word of Victory Church
World Outreach Christian Centre