

NATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FEDERATION SYMPOSIUM



**MARRIAGE MATTERS
FOR LESBIAN AND
GAY PEOPLE
IN IRELAND**

THURSDAY 7TH MAY, 2009, 9:30AM TO 4PM.

THE WESTBURY HOTEL, GRAFTON ST, D2

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

9am: Registration and Coffee

9:30am: WELCOME

Ailbhe Smyth: Chair, NLGF

Carol Baxter: Head of Development, Equality Authority

9:45am: OPENING ADDRESS BY EAMON GILMORE, TD

Leader, Labour Party

10.00am: OPENING PLENARY:

MARRIAGE MATTERS FOR LESBIAN AND GAY PEOPLE

Chair: Ciarán Ó hÚltaicháin, NLGF

SPEAKERS:

Alejandro Alder:

Marriage, Dignity and Equality in Spain

Patricia Prendiville:

Same-Sex Marriage: European Perspectives

Professor Sheila Greene:

Do Children Need Parents of Both Sexes?

(Questions and Answers)

11:30am: BURNING ISSUES

Dr Sean Denyer, NLGF: Presentation of headline results from NLGF National Survey

12pm: Break-out Groups: Issues, Campaigns, Strategies

1pm: LUNCH

2pm: PLENARY PANEL:

MAKING THE CASE FOR MARRIAGE

Chair: Patrick Lynch, NLGF

Grainne Healy, Marriage Equality,

Brian Sheehan, GLEN,

LGBT NOISE,

Dundalk OUTcomers

and feedback from break-out groups.

3pm: CONCLUDING PLENARY

Chair: Ailbhe Smyth, NLGF

Peter Tatchell:

Civil Partnerships are Sexual Apartheid

Niall Crowley:

Concluding Reflections

4pm: SYMPOSIUM ENDS

The NLGF warmly thanks LGBT NOISE for proposing and sponsoring Peter Tatchell's participation in the symposium.



The symposium has been organised by the NLGF with the support of the European Union



SYMPOSIUM CONTEXT

The National Lesbian & Gay Federation (NLGF), with the support of the European Union and The Equality Authority, is hosting a national symposium on the topic: Marriage Matters for Lesbian and Gay People in Ireland. This symposium is part of the action plan to ensure a lasting legacy for The European Year of Equal Opportunities (EYOPA) in Ireland. It follows on the successful NLGF symposium on Marriage and Partnership Rights for Same-Sex Couples held in December 2007 as part of the EYOPA 'Burning Issues' campaign.

SYMPOSIUM AIMS

The major aim of the symposium is to provide a forum for the exchange of information and for dialogue between interested Lesbian and Gay (LG) national organisations, community groups and individuals, as well as legal, equality and human rights professionals, and all those advocating for change on the issue of lesbian and gay marriage, subsequent to the introduction of civil partnership legislation.

We hope that such a dialogue, combined with insights from best practice elsewhere, will contribute to strengthening advocacy campaigns for the achievement of civil marriage rights for lesbian and gay people in Ireland.

We intend to publish a briefing paper on symposium outcomes.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

LG equality advocates and activists; politicians; policy makers; legal practitioners; community and social work professionals; trade unionists; and all those interested in human rights and equality.

REGISTRATION

The symposium is free and a light lunch will be provided.

TO ENSURE A PLACE please register by email by **Monday 4th May** to nlgfederation@gmail.com or call 087 769 9086

Please indicate if you will be having lunch and if you have special dietary requirements or specific access needs.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Alejandro Alder is a Columbian national who has been heavily involved in LGBT activism in Spain for more than five years, during the period when the institution of civil marriage was extended to lesbians and gays in 2005. He worked as both Secretary and President of Iguales (LGBT Association of Salamanca) between 2004 and 2007 and was elected General Secretary of Bolo Bolo in December 2008 (LGBT Association of Castilla – La Mancha). In April 2009, he became the International and Human Rights Coordinator of the key Spanish LGBT organisation: The National Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals (FELGTB).

Niall Crowley is an independent equality and diversity expert. He was Chief Executive Officer of the The Equality Authority from its establishment in 1999 until 2009. Prior to this he worked in the community and voluntary sector with the Travellers' rights organisation Pavee Point for twelve years and during this period he was an active member of the Community Workers Cooperative. He trained as a civil engineer in Trinity College Dublin and worked as a civil engineer in Ireland, Zambia and Mozambique. He also completed a diploma course in youth work and community development in St. Patrick's College Maynooth and he is the author of *An Ambition for Equality*.

Eamon Gilmore has been leader of the Labour Party since 2007 and a TD for Dun Laoghaire since 1989. He was Minister for State for the Marine from 1994 to 1997 and President of the Union of Students of Ireland from 1976 to 1978. The Labour Party's Civil Unions Bill which would have created a status relationship equivalent to marriage – in most respects – for lesbians and gay men was defeated by the government in October 2007.

Professor Sheila Greene is the Director of the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin and holder of the AIB Chair of Childhood Research. Her research interests include applied research into the psychological development and well-being of children and young people and developmental theory. She is the Co-director of Growing Up in Ireland, the National Longitudinal Study of Children. Her publications include *The psychological development of girls and women: Rethinking change in time* and *Researching children's experience: Approaches and methods*, co-edited with Dr Diane Hogan.

Patricia Prendiville has worked in the areas of equality and social change for the past 25 years at both national and European levels as activist, advocate and change agent. From 2004–2009 she was Executive Director of ILGA–Europe, linking the work for human rights and equality on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity from the national to the international, and to the broad equality agenda in terms of multiple discrimination and the indivisibility of human rights. She now works as a consultant to organisations, supporting strategic development for equality outcomes.

Peter Tatchell has campaigned for gay and other human rights since 1967. He was the defeated Labour candidate in the 1983 Bermondsey by-election – the dirtiest and most violent election in Britain for over 100 years. In 1989, he helped found the AIDS activist group ACT UP London, and in 1990 he was a founding member of the gay human rights organisation OutRage! He was voted sixth in the 2006 *New Statesman* readers' poll, "Heroes of our Time," and in the same year *The Independent* listed him as one of top 50 "Good" people in Britain. He is coordinator of the gay human rights group OutRage! and is the Green Party parliamentary candidate for the Oxford East constituency.
