

Challenging inequality
through wage-led growth

LIVING
WAGE



STRONG
ECONOMY



Report of the Executive Council
Biennial Delegate Conference
Ennis 7 – 9 July 2015

STRONGER TOGETHER
CONGRESS
Irish Congress of Trade Unions



AD

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PATRICIA KING

AN INTRODUCTION

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Patricia King



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DAVID BEGG

A REFLECTION

As this is the last Executive Council Report I will contribute to I thought I should take a little space to reflect on my experience of 14 years at the helm of Congress.

Firstly, I want to congratulate Patricia King on her appointment as General Secretary.

Patricia is steeped in the values of the trade union movement and has given a lifetime of service to it. Her commitment and dedication to advancing the cause of workers' rights and living standards is legendary. We are fortunate indeed to have a person of her calibre ready to lean on at a time when growing inequality in society is the principal threat to social cohesion.

The scope for fiscal policy to counter inequality through redistribution is now more limited than in the past due to the enormous debt overhang from the 2008 financial crisis. Collective bargaining is now the vital instrument for redistribution and nobody is more skilled in its practice than Patricia.

Having played a central role in the achievement of new legislation on collective bargaining in the Republic she is well placed now to ensure that we use the legislation to best effect. Cometh the hour, cometh the woman.

In fact, it is a cause of great satisfaction to me that I handed over the reins to the first female General Secretary of Congress. It is also worth observing that the General Secretaries of Trade Union Congress (TUC) in Britain, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) – arguably the top trade union positions in the world – are all held by women. It is an entirely appropriate development especially now that a majority of trade union members are female.

DAVID BEGG



It is worth recording too that our most successful endeavour since BDC2013 was a very public event bringing huge attention to the movement. I am referring to the commemoration of the 1913 Lockout which was masterminded by Sally Anne Kinahan, Congress Assistant General Secretary, Joe O'Flynn, Treasurer and Padraig Yeats, historian. It was the best thing that I have been involved with during my time in Congress.

I look back on my time in Congress as essentially a game of two halves. The first seven years were totally preoccupied with Social Partnership. We negotiated a number of national agreements which improved living standards for our members and enhanced the range and quality of public services.

There was always hostility from the political right and ultra-left to Social Partnership but the onset of the 2008 financial crisis was the signal for open season. Without a shred of evidence Social Partnership was conflated with, and blamed for, the fiscal difficulties visited on the country. The truth of course was that up to 2008 Ireland was running an annual fiscal surplus and, at 25%, one of the lowest debt to GDP ratios in the EU. It was a property and banking crisis pure and simple that caused the crash - Social Partnership had nothing to do with it.

The second half, post the 2008 crisis, could not have been more different or difficult.

Nevertheless, we did make a determined effort to convince people that there was A Better, Fairer Way. It was a slogan taken up in different forms by other actors and there is a certain flattery in imitation. The most important thing is that our analysis in 2008 was accurate, that it held up in the years since and was, unfortunately, borne out by events.



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Caption

Europe today is contending with the kind of Japanese slump that we warned about almost seven years ago.

I recently looked back on my inaugural speech to BDC in Bundoran, in 2001. I spoke about the destructive power of modern capitalism that I had witnessed in Thailand during the Asian crisis of the 1990s. I must confess that I never expected to experience anything similar in my own country.

The world is in a strange place right now. The orthodoxies that have dominated policy making in Europe have been exposed as flawed. Austerity on a continuing basis is unsustainable.

There is space now for new ideas. As Keynes remarked, it is ideas which are dangerous. We are in the business of peddling ideas – ideas for a better world built on social justice. The Nevin Institute has made a real difference to our capacity to advance our ideas in ways that cannot easily be dismissed. People are ready now to listen. To quote Keynes again:

“At the present moment people are unusually expectant of a more fundamental diagnosis; more particularly ready to receive it; eager to try it out, if it should be even plausible.”

It is a time of great promise. It is a time of opportunity. While my support will have to come from the back benches from now on I will continue, in whatever way I can, to advocate for those ideas and values that we all hold dear. It has been a privilege to serve the cause with you. God Bless!

DAVID BEGG SIGNATURE HERE

DAVID BEGG

AN APPRECIATION

It was the current General Secretary who most accurately captured the contribution made by David Begg during his 14 years at the helm of Congress, most especially his role in the years following the 2008 Crash, when the upper echelons of Ireland's banks brought us closer to the abyss than we had ever previously come.

"Exceptional leadership during extraordinary times," is how Patricia King characterised David's stellar contribution, a sentiment with which I and many, many colleagues would fully agree.

In fact, it is no exaggeration to state that the Irish trade union movement was extremely lucky to have David Begg in situ when the crisis hit, as his great strengths were the key qualities required at that time.

There was no empty rhetoric or shallow gestures. Instead the trade union movement benefitted from David's capacity for calm, strategic analysis coupled with a deep and abiding sense of the movement's role as agent of positive change and social justice.

From day one of the crisis he warned of the dangerous road the Irish government and the European Union had decided to travel, in their self-defeating adherence to austerity economics. He was a lone voice and subjected to some intense criticism, as a result.

It took great moral courage to advance the case he did in the circumstances that prevailed at the time: when to question official policy was almost akin to treason. In fact I remember a major national newspaper accusing Congress at the time of 'national sabotage'.

John Douglas



He was determined that Congress had a duty both to its members and the citizens of the island not just to oppose, but to put forward alternative propositions that were both costed and realistic.

And that we did, consistently, showing how jobs could be created, growth stimulated and wider society spared the excesses of ideological technocrats, such as those which staffed the Troika.

The Congress opposition to austerity was also echoed at European level, especially by the ETUC, where David's very forensic, reasoned and ultimately accurate analysis of the Irish crisis won many admirers and hugely embellished the image of Congress and the Irish trade union movement abroad.

Indeed, one of his key achievements was the establishment of the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), set up to properly arm trade unions for what David described as "the battle of ideas" over the future direction of Irish society.

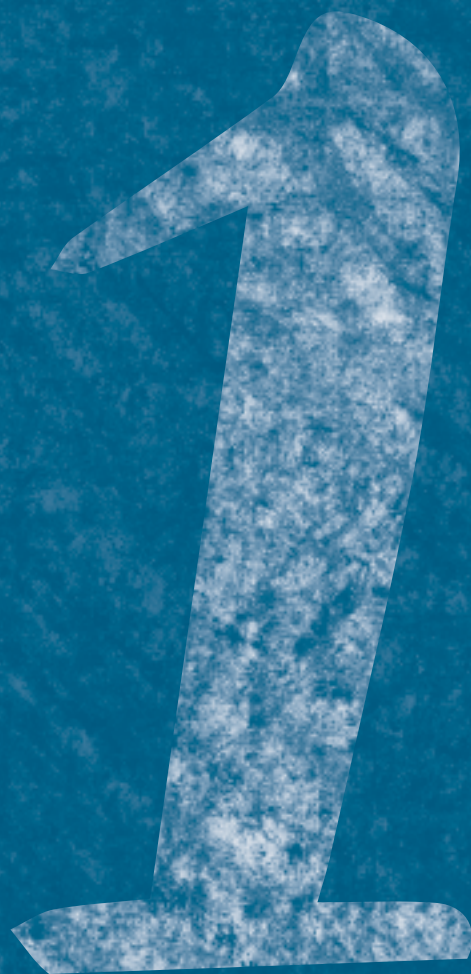
And it was due to his foresight that work on developing a coherent alternative economic model for the island of Ireland was initiated and will come to fruition in the near future.

Its falls to us now to work and make that alternative vision a reality.

John Douglas, President

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SECTION 1 CAN EUROPE AVOID A PRO- LONGED SLUMP?





EU POLICY FAILS TO DELIVER GROWTH

It is worth reminding ourselves that as far back as 2008 Congress warned that austerity ran the risk of depressing domestic demand and causing deflation.

Unfortunately, this prediction proved to be accurate and by early 2015 deflation had taken hold, as EU inflation fell below zero to -0.2 per cent.

The European Central Bank moved towards Quantitative Easing (QE: buying government and corporate bonds) in an attempt to weaken the euro, increase the price of imports and thereby push up inflation and making exports more competitive.

The idea is that the resultant low bond yields will incentivise investors to put their money into productive investment thereby stimulating economic growth. However, one potential obstacle is that non-financial companies are currently awash with \$3.5 trillion of cash that they are not investing.

At the time of writing it is uncertain whether QE will work as intended. The euro has depreciated by 2.7% against the dollar and the US may soon raise interest rates. One suspects that, like every response by the EU to date, this is not quite enough. A new 'grand bargain' for Europe is what is needed - one that will use fiscal and monetary means to stimulate the economy.

Austerity plus reform was never a good choice to offer Europe. We have to offer growth and macro-economic policy should do what it takes to spur that growth.

European leaders completely bought into the notion that the economic crisis was brought on by too much spending, by nations living beyond their means. The way forward, German chancellor Angela Merkel insisted, was a return to frugality. Europe, she declared, should emulate the famously thrifty Swabian housewife.

This was a prescription for slow motion disaster, one we have been watching unfold since 2008. European debtors did, in fact, need to tighten their belts. But the austerity they were actually forced to impose was incredibly savage.

Meanwhile, Germany and other core economies – which needed to spend more, to offset belt-tightening in the periphery – also tried to spend less. The result was to create an environment in which reducing debt ratios was impossible: real growth slowed to a crawl, inflation fell to almost nothing, and outright deflation has taken hold in the worst-hit nations.

Suffering voters put up with this policy disaster for a remarkable long time, believing in the promises of the elite that they would soon see their sacrifices rewarded. But as the pain has continued with no visible signs of progress, radicalisation was inevitable. Anyone surprised by the left's victory in Greece, or the surge of anti-establishment forces in Spain, hasn't been paying attention.

The Syriza victory has also put a strong focus on the issue of debt sustainability. This remains an extreme vulnerability even for Ireland because any combination of external shock, deflation or increased interest rates could destabilise the recovery.

However, it is not just in the economic sphere that Syriza is upsetting the status quo. Greece has strongly opposed EU policy on Ukraine too. The geo-political consequences of Greece breaking rank and aligning with Russia will cause concern in the United States.

How all this plays out will be fascinating to watch. At best Podemos in Spain will cause a similar election upset, in which case European leaders will possibly consider a change in direction.

The more likely outcome is that Greece, for now anyway, will have to settle for an extension of debt maturities and a more favourable interest rate. Nevertheless, the Syriza proposal of freezing a part of the overall debt until economic recovery is achieved is rational. If debt is unsustainable it cannot be managed without a radically different approach.

THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

In its Quarterly Bulletin published on February 3, the Central Bank says that:

"The recovery of the Irish economy has broadened and gained momentum over the past year. Recovery has been led by strong growth in exports and investment, and is also being supported by the resumption of growth in consumer spending. The latter has been helped by the continuing growth in employment, which even though slowing somewhat, has allowed the unemployment rate to continue to decline steadily. With consumer and investment spending both rising, domestic demand contributed positively to growth in 2014 for the first time since the downturn.

"Notwithstanding the improved performance of the domestic side of the economy, however, the main driver of growth over the past year has been the exceptionally strong export performance. In part, this appears to have been due to some special factors. In 2014, exports grew much faster than import demand in trading partner countries, with the difference accounted for by a large contribution to export growth from contract manufacturing outside Ireland (arising when goods owned by an Irish entity are manufactured in and shipped from a foreign country). Viewing this surge in export growth as a temporary factor suggests that the underlying strength of the recovery over the past year is less than signalled by the currently projected increase in GDP growth for 2014 of just over 5 per cent.

"Looking ahead, it is expected that, this year and next, exports will return to growing broadly in line with projected growth in external demand. Helped by Ireland's trade links with the more strongly growing US and UK markets, this will continue to generate a strong growth rate for exports, although representing a slowdown as compared to 2014. On the domestic side, an improving labour market and rising real disposable incomes should lend greater support to consumer spending in 2015 and 2016, though high levels of indebtedness remain a headwind to any strong recovery in

consumption. While moderating slightly from its current rate, investment is projected to grow solidly in coming years, continuing to rebound from the earlier extended period during which investment had fallen to relatively low levels”.

The Central Bank suggests that GDP growth in 2014 and 2015 will turn out to be stronger than anticipated. It expects GDP growth to be 5.1% in 2014 and its forecast for 2015 is 3.7 %. This is a 0.3% improvement on the bank’s previous forecast and they attribute it to improved consumer spending and investment. The bank acknowledges, however, that debt remains extremely high.

For its part the European Commission predicted on February 5 that Ireland would be the fastest growing country in the Eurozone in 2015 with GDP expanding by 3.5%.

Germany, the Eurozone’s largest economy, will grow by 1.5% while France, the second-largest, is forecast to grow by 1% and Italy by 0.6% which would be its first annual growth since 2011. Countries whose economies are interlinked with Russia may suffer from the fall of the rouble and the difficulties of the Russian economy.

For the EU as a whole – in short the Eurozone plus the nine non-euro countries – growth is also forecast to be 1.7% in 2016.

The Commission’s prediction that the Greek economy would grow by 2.5% in 2015 was made on the assumption that the Greek government would implement the existing bail-out programme in full, which is unlikely.

The Commission admits that the Eurozone remains ‘stuck in low gear.’

Although the recent drop in the price of oil is expected to boost economic growth and the lower value of the euro on foreign exchange markets will make European exports more competitive, the Commission forecasts that growth in the Eurozone will be only 1.3% in 2015. Although that is up 0.2 percentage points on its last forecast in November, the improvement is only modest.

The report also acknowledges serious risks to the Eurozone in the form of geopolitical tensions, financial market volatility, and a protracted period

of low inflation all threatening to drag growth down further.

There is a compelling need to offer workers hope for the future. As even the Taoiseach had acknowledged Ireland’s recovery remains fragile. The 2008 crisis was the fourth the country has suffered since independence. It happened before in the 1930s, 1950s and 1980s. We do not have a sustainable development model.

It is neither fish nor flesh in a European context and remains incredibly vulnerable to low tax induced corporate investment. We can never have the type of public services the Danes, the Finns and the Dutch have if we insist on retaining this kind of tax regime. It may not be sustainable anyway if the OECD ultimately cracks down on tax competition. That is why the Nevin Institute’s work on a new political economy model is so important. (See Section Three for an extract from this work).

Producing a new political economy model is more challenging than it might seem. It must be a workable model, capable of extracting best outcomes from a situation in which the space for independent national policy making is very limited. A utopian vision of the future may be intellectually pleasing but it will be of no value to workers.

There are a number of factors which constrain the policy space. Foremost among them is debt, public, private and corporate. In all OECD countries except Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, the rescue of the banks has pushed debt upwards, surpassing 100% of GDP in eight countries. In Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Greece and Spain, governments of any colour will for decades have limited public spending options (unless they raise taxation).

The second factor of importance is that the Eurozone now lives under effective Germany hegemony. Germany eschews Keynesianism in favour of ordoliberalism. This concept is based on a social market economy, founded on prudence and scepticism of state intervention. The role of government is to set and enforce compliance with rules for the operation of markets.

A third constraint on policy is a combination of changes that began to materialise in the last twenty years, viz: diminished growth rates, the maturation of welfare states and an ageing population.

These are formidable barriers to constructing the type of sustainable and socially just society we want to create. Yet there is no choice for us but to confront them and find a route to best possible outcomes. Political populism will never address these realities.

However, it is also important to keep in mind that capitalism is not homogenous. There are many varieties of it and from the standpoint of a small open economy the Nordic countries have achieved best outcomes in terms of economic development and social cohesion. If we can design a political economy model that aligns Ireland with the Nordic countries to the maximum extent possible, then Congress will have something worth advocating for in the years ahead.

One consequence of the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath is that European citizens no longer have confidence in the political and administrative elite of Europe. For most of its history European integration proceeded on the basis of a kind of permissive consensus. That is no longer the case.

Those in charge misunderstood the consequences of headlong financial liberalisation. When the crash came they responded by heaping austerity upon austerity. It didn't work because austerity prevented growth. In this environment reducing debt ratios became impossible. Inflation fell to almost nothing and outright deflation has taken hold in some countries.

Within the Eurozone power is concentrated in the hands of Germany and the creditor countries together with the ECB/EU/IMF Troika, a trio of unelected bureaucracies. The people most adversely affected have no influence on them.

People can hardly be blamed for feeling that Europe is not being run for them but for a handful of well-connected insiders who reap most of the benefits and, when things go wrong, are not just shielded from loss but impose massive costs on everybody else.

Recent revelations about HSBC bank and tax evasion are a case in point. After all that has happened it is rather shocking that 350 clients associated with Ireland held more than €3 billion in accounts with the bank

The loss of confidence in the competence and probity of elites inevitably reduced trust in democratic legitimacy. This has created an outraged populism on both the left and the right. It will take much time and effort to get the integration project back on track.

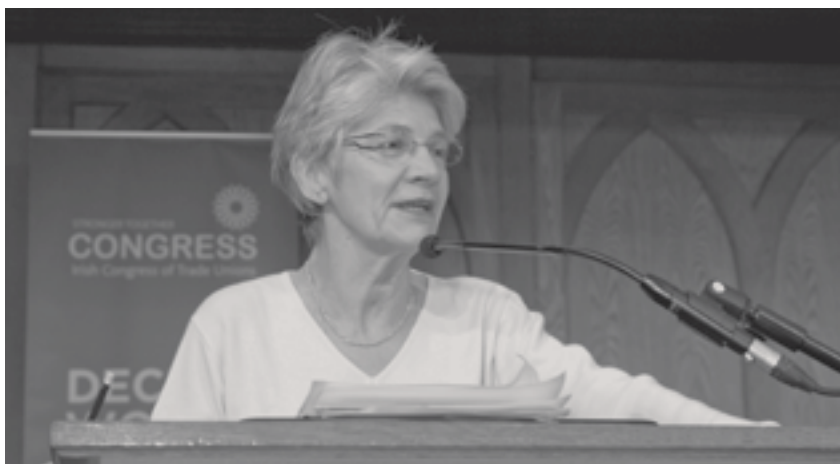
This has been a tragic mistake with consequences for all. Although Ireland is leading Europe in terms of growth we labour under an unsustainable level of debt. There is no point pretending that it is otherwise. That is why we should be very slow to join others in ganging up on the Greeks.

We too need a European solution that makes debt sustainable.

Austerity combined with reform was never a good choice to offer Europe. Growth has to be part of the deal. A new grand bargain is needed in which the European economy is stimulated, both by fiscal and monetary means. For the bargain to work everybody has to see that they benefit. This is the only way the European integration project - the most ambitious political experiment in history - can be saved.

It is a paradox of the current economic stagnation that, according to research by Deloitte, the largest companies internationally are sitting on a cash pile of \$3.5 trillion. The challenge for governments is to find ways to induce these companies to invest in jobs and to get the global economy moving again.

These issues are enormously important. We can advance ideas which may have some influence but there is little we can do directly to alter the course of policy. Nevertheless, we can intervene in market relationships to ensure decent work and a fairer distribution of the wealth our members work to create. There is important work for us in generating wage led growth and combatting economic inequality. This should be our principal focus in the immediate future.



Captions here

CONGRESS PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSIONS

Context

Congress has spoken publicly on many occasions about our dissatisfaction with the 'Troika'. In our experience they were collectively indifferent to the social consequences of the austerity policies imposed on Ireland. We did manage to establish a workable bi-lateral relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but, when part of the Troika, they went along with the collective ideological orthodoxy.

Under the terms of the treaty ratified in 2011, a process known as the European Semester was launched. Aimed at increasing European Union (EU) oversight of national finances, the process begins each November, with the publication of the Commission's annual growth survey. This is followed by the Commission visiting countries in the beginning of the year and issuing Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) in late spring, early summer. These are supposed to feed into the budget process.

Ireland was, in common with other programme countries, exempt from this process. In 2014, consequent on Ireland's exit from the bailout programme, we entered the European Semester process.

While this process may be politically unpalatable, it is the structure we now have to deal with. It represents an accretion of power to the European Commission and to the Ministries of Finance at the expense of parliaments, both national and European.

It is intended that national governments consult with unions and employers, but in the case of Ireland no realistic consultation has yet taken place.

Congress met the EU delegations in 2014 and 2015. Congress also monitored the CSRs which were of particular relevance to the labour market and to social policy.

At European level, much of what emerges in CSRs is prefigured by developments in Brussels. These

are monitored by the tripartite social summit and by the social dialogue committee in which Congress is represented via the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

In our pre-budget submissions we never failed to convey our strong belief in the ultimate failure of austerity. But, we also had to deal with the reality that the policy space available to government was constrained by the external forces described above.

BUDGET 2014

In the Congress pre-Budget Submission for Budget 2014 - A Different Fiscal Adjustment is Possible (2013) - we argued that a change of course was required if there was to be any hope of economic recovery and that economic policy had to become more job focused and growth friendly. We argued that we could adopt this approach and still reach agreed budgetary targets. In reality we stood a better chance of reaching those targets if we combined a different fiscal adjustment with an investment/jobs stimulus.

We outlined three key measures that could be adopted in Budget 2014 to make this happen:

- Use the proceeds of the 'Promissory Note' deal to reduce the size of the budget adjustment.
- Bring forward a capital investment stimulus package of €4.5 billion over the next two years.
- Target tax increases at the richest 10% of households.

We said we believed this would result in the creation of new jobs, boost economic output and government revenue and avoid further damage to essential public services and social cohesion.

Focusing on growth would also help to restore international confidence in Ireland, while addressing infrastructural deficits that undermine our competitiveness.

This policy mix would result in a reduction in the government deficit to about 3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015.

We pointed out that existing policy had left us with one in four out of work or under-employed, with collapsed retail sales and flat domestic demand and with public finances constrained by the cost of servicing the private banking debt.

BUDGET 2015: JOBS, GROWTH & HOMES

In advance of Budget 2015, we argued that there was now some evidence that the Irish economy was finally making a long delayed and tentative recovery.

Employment had grown by over 2% since early 2013 while unemployment continued to fall. However, seasonally adjusted employment growth in the first quarter of 2014 was minimal – just 1,700.

Economic activity was starting to revive with preliminary estimates showing that GDP grew 2.7% on a seasonally adjusted basis in the first quarter of 2014. On the other hand personal consumption fell once again in 2013 and it was much too early to say that a recovery had taken hold.

Most households had not seen tangible improvements in their living standards. Levels of household and corporate indebtedness remained very high while the credit conditions for small and medium enterprises were weak.

Meanwhile Ireland still had very high levels of long-term unemployment and youth unemployment. Investment was at rock bottom - in the Eurozone, only Cyprus had a lower level of investment. Indeed, Ireland's extremely low level of public investment was a drag on employment and the economy's potential output. Alongside all this was a growing social and housing crisis. Finally, Ireland's debt to GDP ratio was dangerously high and it was too early to claim that the public finances were repaired. Overall the recovery was tentative and a slowdown in growth internationally would quickly undo much of the gains.

We noted that the government was committed to hitting its 3% budget deficit target in 2015. However, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Irish government would not need to implement anything like €2 billion of austerity measures in Budget 2015



in order to hit that target. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) had both argued that Ireland's structural deficit was close to zero.

If this was correct it meant that economic recovery should by itself eliminate the deficit without much, if any, need for additional budgetary consolidation. Congress was recommending a net adjustment of €800 million in Budget 2015. The case for tax cuts in Budget 2015 was very weak and any tax cuts would have to be financed by a tax increase elsewhere. Public spending was already extremely squeezed.

Finally, we argued that economic recovery must be an inclusive recovery that benefited everyone in society. We could not leave behind vulnerable individuals and communities. A small additional adjustment was appropriate in Budget 2015 to ensure that Ireland's public finances were firmly placed on a sustainable path. Specifically, we proposed the following:

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Caption

- Refundable tax credits.
- An end to public spending cuts.
- An increase in capital expenditure.
- A net budgetary adjustment of €800m achieved mainly through revenue increases and reform of tax expenditure.
- An increase of social spending of €400m.
- An off book investment package to boost employment.

CONCLUSION

Since 2008 approximately €30 billion, or 20% of Gross National Product (GNP), has been taken out of the economy in a series of budgets. A little over one third came from increased taxation and two thirds came from public expenditure. This year will see a budget deficit of 2% and 2016 will probably see some easing of the fiscal pressure.

With real GNP down 14% at the trough of the recession the share of greatly reduced national income going on welfare increased by 6% between 2007 and 2011 mainly because of unemployment. So, of the €30 billion adjustment over recent years, one-third went to fund increased spending on social welfare.

AD

SECTION 2
LIVING WAGE,
STRONG ECONOMY





THE NECESSITY FOR WAGE LED GROWTH

Over the last 12 months, the Central Bank has urged trade unions to raise their wage demands. Yes it did happen. But not here. Unfortunately, it was the German Central Bank, the Bundesbank, which urged German trade unions to up their wage demands – at least above the rate of inflation. Somehow, it seems unlikely that Dame Street (or Merrion Street) will be issuing similar advice in the Republic of Ireland, or that we will hear it in Northern Ireland either.

As matters stand, real wages have been in freefall since 2009 – compounding a fall in levels of consumer demand. Recent news of a modest recovery in average weekly earnings is welcome (see Chart 1 below).

The latest trends show a downward overall trend in average weekly earnings from the beginning of 2009, to the third quarter of last year. There was a sudden and sharp increase in estimated average weekly earnings in the last quarter of 2014. This pushed the average weekly rate back up to where it was at the beginning of the recession.

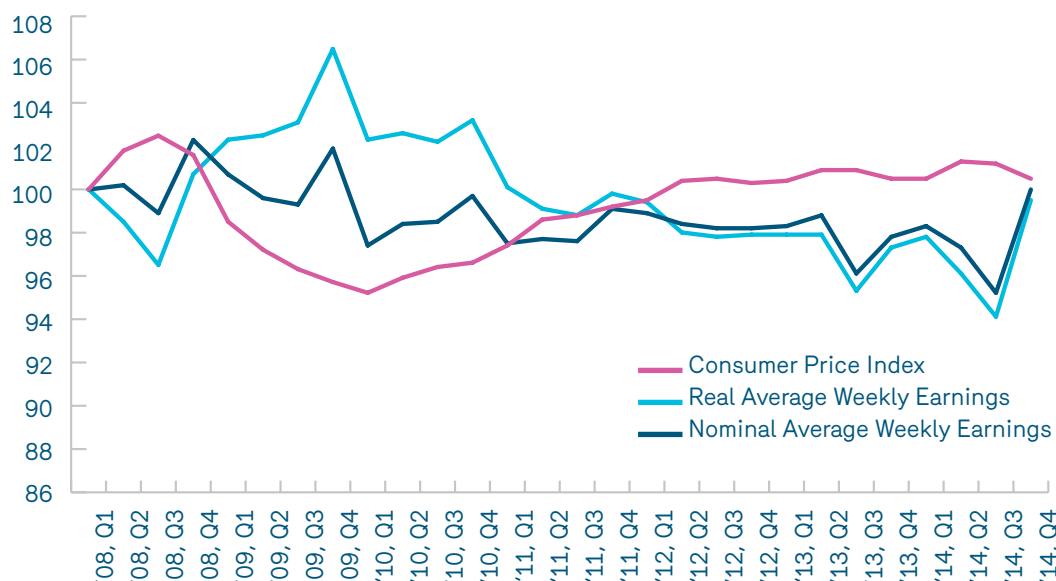
While there can be some flux in quarterly estimates and the final quarter estimate is ‘provisional’ it does appear that the pattern of falling wages has come to an end – provided that the economy continues to recover. When inflation is taken into account (using the consumer price index which includes the effect of falling mortgage interest costs in recent years) ‘real wages’ have moved more or less in tandem with nominal wages since the beginning of 2011 (reflecting low inflation).

The dotted line in Chart 1 shows the movement in the consumer price index. There was a re-emergence of very mild price deflation in the second half of last year – reflecting among other factors the impact falling oil prices.

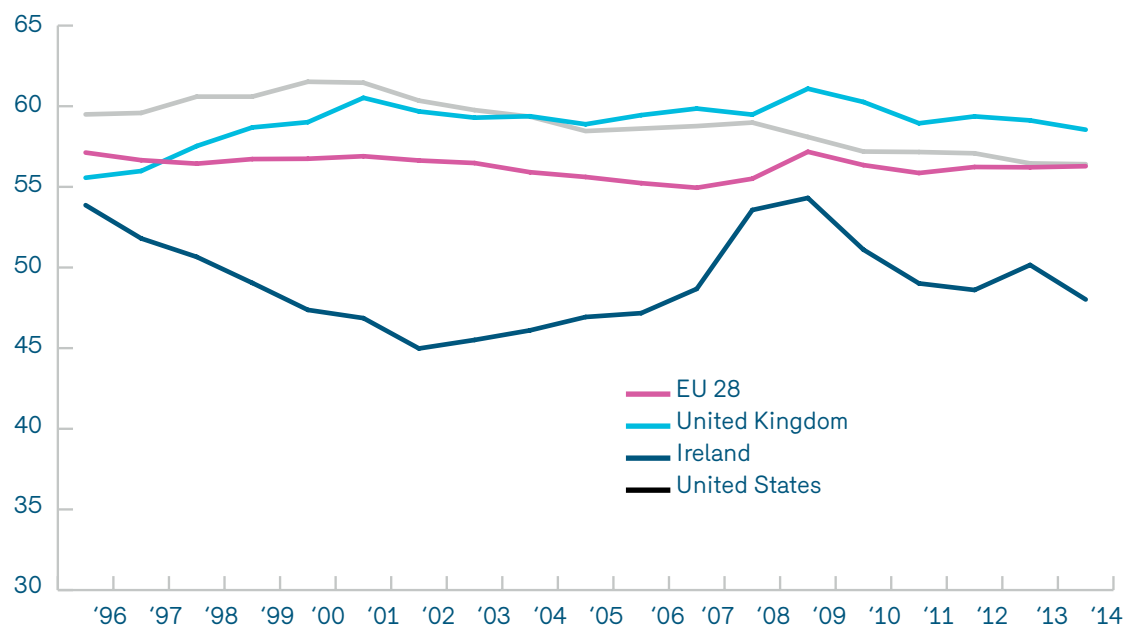
The pattern of recovery in wages is very uneven across sectors and occupations, with some sectors and occupations faring worse than others. From the end of 2009 to the end of 2014 real average weekly earnings fell by just over 6% on average. Coupled with the impact of cuts in social welfare and increases in taxation the actual cut in



Average weekly earnings in the Republic of Ireland



Adjusted wage share as a % of GDP



livings standards for households mainly dependent on wage income was greater than 6%, over that period.

However, a weak recovery in wages and in demand is not the equivalent of a nuclear wage explosion. The share of wages in total national income has been

trending downwards over a long period, since before the recession. An interruption to this long-term trend in 2009 as a result of a recession-driven collapse in company profitability (some of which was linked to the banks going bust) did not buck the long term pattern (Chart 2)

Share of Wages in Total National Income (Republic of Ireland)

The reasons for a decline in labour share of income both in Ireland and in some other countries are many and complex and reflect shifts in the composition of the workforce, demographics, technological change, globalisation along with, in some cases, the diminished power of labour.

Looking to the coming months and years what are the prospects for a recovery in wages?

With a modest, continuing fall in unemployment and increased demand for labour in growing sectors of the economy, we are likely to see some small growth in earnings in the order of 2 to 3% in most sectors. With GDP likely to grow at a faster rate it is likely, in the absence of any other major shocks, that wages as a share of 'value added' (Gross Value Added which is close to GDP) will decline.

In other words, it is likely – in the absence of other factors – that corporate and other 'non-labour' income is growing faster than wages as some sectors recover. The latest available published data from Eurostat/CSO indicate a slow recovery in profits from 2010 onwards.

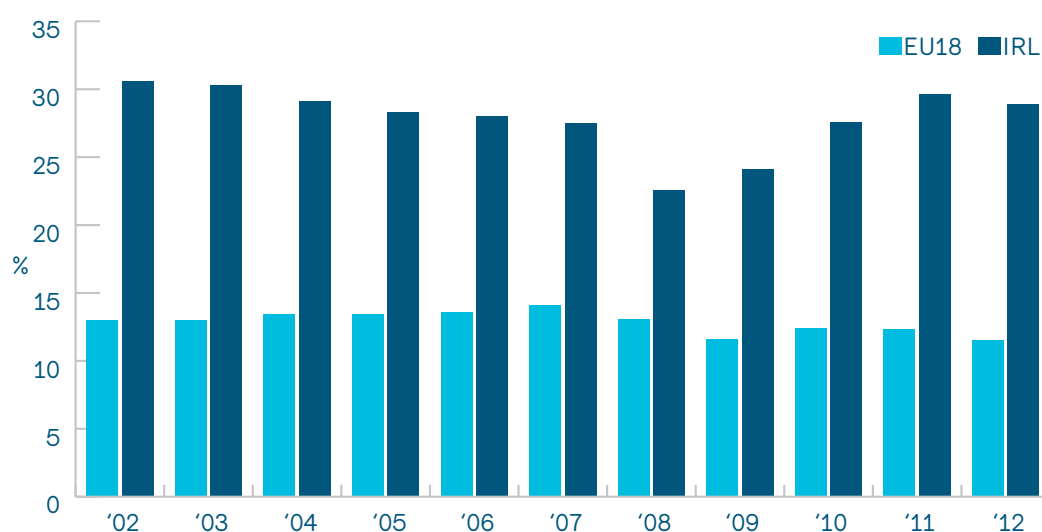
The closest proxy measure for profits is 'Net Operating Surplus and Mixed Income' of all corporations (financial and non-financial). After a plunge of 22% in 2009, the total rose at an annual rate of just over 10% in 2010 and 2011 before levelling off at €47 billion in 2012.

Chart 3 compares Ireland (Republic) with the average for the Eurozone (18 countries). While the structure of GDP and company profitability differs, with Ireland attracting a large number of 'profit-shifting' and 'profit-bookings' companies compared to other countries, it is clear that company profitability has recovered well since the crash of 2008, with a steady increase in profits as a percentage of GDP. The share is back up to 28.9% in 2012 compared to 27.5% in 2007 before the recession hit.

It should be remembered that GDP – even though it contains a large amount of 'booked profits' some of which are 'repatriated' abroad by multinational companies operating here - represents the total amount of income or production in Ireland which is liable for taxation BEFORE repatriation.

In any period of bust and boom profits - as a residual in the income flows to producers - tend to be more erratic.

Profits as % of GDP Ireland and the Eurozone countries



While the share of profits held up well during the Celtic Tiger period up to 2007, many companies took a huge hit in 2008 as did employees who lost their jobs, many (though not all) of the self-employed and most workers in the public and private sectors. Clerical, manual and retail works took a bigger wage hit than professional and managerial workers, as CSO data revealed.

What we have seen in the three years since the worst point of the recession has been relative stagnation in real wages (notwithstanding the turnaround in the last quarter of 2014). It is highly likely that company profitability has recovered well in 2014 (reflecting rising GDP, investment and retail sales).

Provided that GDP continues to grow at a rate of between 3 and 4% there are grounds for a recovery in average nominal wages ahead of the rate of inflation and broadly in line with GDP. However, any recovery in wages will reflect conditions in different sectors and occupations including the public sector, where some unwinding of previous cuts and re-alignment in salary and wage scales can be expected.

Would Irish policy makers, negotiators and analysts consider the case of the German union IG Metall?

The union recently won a 3.4% pay increase and a one-off payment of €150 to workers in the state of Baden-Württemberg.

In Ireland, the issue at macroeconomic level is no longer whether there should a pay rise. Rather, it is how much and where.

A wage rise in Ireland would stimulate consumer demand, would increase revenue flow to the exchequer and, if implemented wisely, could contribute to a reduction in household income inequality. The Republic of Ireland has a lower hourly labour cost in the case of manufacturing industry than: Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, France, Netherlands and Austria [See NERI Quarterly Economic Facts. Indicator 3.1].

Yes, the Republic of Ireland has higher hourly labour costs than the UK (by a difference of very roughly €3 per hour depending on sector). However, the UK comes second lowest in the EU15 group of advanced European economies.

In considering what is likely to happen in Ireland and what is desirable from a wider social and economic perspective analysts, negotiators and policy makers should pay attention to:

- The relationship between low pay and poverty.
- The role of the statutory hourly National Minimum Wage and low pay broadly.
- The gradual uplift of a quarter of million workers on low pay towards a 'living wage' (€11.45 per hour for single person household)
- The degree of inequality in wages among employees as well as the returns to different sources of income, for employees, self-employed, farming and businesses.
- The relationship between a sustained and evenly spread wage recovery and domestic demand.
- The relationship between costs (including labour costs) and price competitiveness especially in those sectors of the economy susceptible to international competition in trade.
- The interaction between public expenditure, public services and the public sector pay bill including the cost of pensions.

And last but not least....

- The **Social Wage** – defined as those collective goods and services such as care, education, health and income protection in sickness, old age and unemployment – which together with individual wages 'in your pocket' make for a healthy, prosperous and happy society.

And to fund a European standard of social wage, Ireland needs to develop a European standard of taxation and social insurance – very different from what we know today.

DEVELOPMENTS IN PRIVATE SECTOR PAY

In the 12 months leading to mid-2014 earnings fell in both the public and private sectors, despite rising growth and employment. The Central Statistics Office found that average weekly earnings were down 0.8%, over that timeframe.

After six years of stagnant or falling earnings, this stark finding underlines the need for pay restoration in all sectors of the economy – private and public – both to improve living standards and to support our fragile recovery by getting people spending in the local economy again.

Local pay bargaining, which emerged at the beginning of this decade, has expanded further in recent time, beyond the sectors where it first emerged - pharmaceuticals, chemicals and medical devices. Deals in food engineering and manufacturing have ensured that the 2% benchmark is consolidating. For instance, in the retail sector local bargaining has again become commonplace with Tesco, Boots and Heaton's effectively keeping the 2% norm. Inflation remains remarkably low meaning that, according to SIPTU's Gerry McCormack "2% was delivering real improvements in take home pay as inflation is close to zero."

Most of the local bargaining in the early stages tended not to use the services of the Labour Court but the Court is increasingly being asked to give its view and has generally endorsed the annual 2% figure.

A number of affiliates - including SIPTU and the TEEU - recently launched campaigns designed to win pay increases of 5% in all sectors, in 2015.

Wage Developments in Retail & Communications

The pattern of wage increases in the retail trade is now fairly well established at 2% for twelve months. The precise pattern is set out below, thanks to Gerry Light of Mandate. It should be noted that with the exception of Dunne's stores, all the concerns listed below have hours stability agreements, which generally provide for some form of hours banding.

In the absence of such an arrangement any wage increases could be eroded by the cutting of hours.

Pay Increases in 2014

COMPANY	WORKFORCE	
Argos	1400	2% backdate to July 2013, 1% from July 2014
Arnotts	571	2% from May/June 2014 for 12 months
Boots	1825	2% June 2013, 2% from June 2014 for 12 months
Debenhams	1742	2% for 12 months from September 2013
Dunnes	11000	3% from March 2013, duration not specified
Heaton's	2136	restore 3% wage cut and 2% from September 2015
Penneys	6200	3% from June 2013
Supervalu MOP	2500	2% from June 2014 for 12 months
Tesco	14000	1% from Jan 2014, 1% from June 2014, 12 months total
Brown Thomas	600	2% June 2013 for 12 months

At the time of writing, negotiations were under way in Pettits, Shaws and Marks & Spencers.

The following settlements have been reached in the communications sector:

Vodafone	243	1.5% for 12 months from Jan 2013
PhoneWatch	128	3% for 12 months from Jan 2014
Firstsource	713	2% for 12 months from Jan 2014

Other Key Sectors

In addition, SIPTU has recorded 40 separate wage increases in 2014. Sixteen of the agreements were for 12 months duration, 11 were for a duration of between 13 and 24 months and the balance were for a duration of greater than 25 months (mainly for 36 months duration).

Two agreements in the pharmachem/ medical devices sector have a duration of 54 months. Settlements continued the trend of 2013 and ran at about 2% on an annualised basis. There is little divergence between the sectors, as can be seen below:

Agribusiness Meat/Dairy	1.9%
Electronics and Engineering	1.9%
Agriculture Food & Drink	1.6%
Industrial Production	1.9%
Pharmachem/Medical Devices	2.05%

At first sight this appears a slowdown on the number of agreements in 2013, where 74 were concluded. However, only 28% of these agreements were of 12 months duration, with 53% due a phased payment in 2014 and 18% due a phased payment in 2015.

PUBLIC SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

As part of the Executive Council Reports to BDC 2011 and BDC 2013 we outlined what was, without doubt, the most challenging period ever faced by the Public Services Committee (PSC) of Congress.

Public Sector Pay (Haddington Road Agreement)

In the Executive Council report to BDC 2013 we reported that the proposals for a renewal of the Croke Park agreement had been rejected by the Public Sector unions in April 2013. In light of the rejection the Labour Relations' Commission began to contact the various public sector unions on an individual basis.

Over the course of subsequent months, the LRC brokered a series of bilateral agreements between individual unions and their respective employers which modified elements of the proposals that had been rejected.

The government, for its part, steered legislation through the Oireachtas that allowed it to freeze increments and gave it extensive powers to alter conditions of employment for public servants. They made clear that no such steps would be taken in respect of groups that concluded agreements.

Image to be placed here

Ultimately, the various bilateral agreements were incorporated into an over-arching agreement that became known as the Haddington Road Agreement. The precise impact of this agreement varies from group to group.

The agreement is scheduled to last until mid-2016. At the time of writing this report negotiations had commenced on a replacement agreement. The negotiations commenced following a claim for an increase in pay by the Public Sector Committee of Congress and an announcement by the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform that he intended to begin the process of unwinding the legislation that allowed for adjustments in pay as part of the financial emergency. It is expected that the negotiations will conclude in early June 2015. The implementation of Haddington Road Agreement is overseen by bodies in the various sectors and by an overarching implementation group. The PSC is represented on this latter body by: Shay Cody, Patricia King, Tom Geraghty and Shelia Nunan.

Changes to Sick Leave Agreements

In the period under review there were extensive discussions with the public sector unions on management proposals to alter the sick leave entitlement of public servants. When no agreement could be reached in direct discussions, the matter was referred to the LRC.

Despite the LRC intervention it required three Labour Court hearings before final proposals emerged. The new arrangements include a shorter period of sick leave, where full and half pay will be applicable. However a protocol has been developed that envisages that for instances of critical illness the general provisions will not apply.

Public Sector Pension – Single Scheme

In the Executive Council report to the BDC 2013 we recorded that a new single pension scheme for the public service had been established. The new scheme is a 'career average' scheme where pension entitlement is based on your earnings across all years of service.

When the scheme was established there were a number matters that remained to be resolved and, in the period under review, a good deal of effort has been made to find agreement on these. Two matters

in particular require a further agreement namely: Transfer and Purchase arrangements and Ill-Health Retirement arrangements.

At the time of writing a draft circular had been sent to the staff side on Transfer and Purchase arrangements and it is envisaged that agreement will be reached early in 2015. It is also envisaged that a scheme for Ill Health Retirement will be in place before the end of 2015.

Strengthening Civil Service Accountability & Performance

In January 2014 the government published a consultation paper on this issue. The paper proposed a number of significant changes to the way the Civil Service operated and a number of measures aimed at improving the performance of individual Civil Servants.

When the government published its consultation paper it also established an independent panel to review submissions received.

In April 2014, Congress made a detailed submission in which we argued that any reform of the Civil Service should be guided by three principles or values, namely

- that any proposed reform should be in the public interest and be citizen-focused,
- take account of the needs of Civil Servants and
- draw on best practice.

Congress subsequently met with the independent panel (in March 2014) to brief them in detail on our submission.

In May 2014 the panel published its report to government and in October 2014 the government published A Civil Service Renewal Plan. The plan contains a number of measures that have been broadly welcomed. Both Congress and the independent panel had supported the proposal that was contained in the original consultation paper - that a head of the Civil Service be appointed – but the government chose not to proceed with this initiative.

Local Authority: Water Services

We reported to BDC in 2013 that the government had decided on a very ambitious reform of the water services sector. In essence the decision was made to create a new utility company which would assume responsibility for the running of the water service, taking over this role from the local authorities. While the new utility company would have responsibility for water services, the day to day running of the service would continue to be undertaken by local authorities acting as agents, through a service level agreement.

One of the main concerns of Congress was to secure the employment and terms and conditions of the thousands of workers working in water services in local authorities.

In the period under review Congress was involved - through the Irish Water Consultative Group (IWCG) - in securing a deal which provides that the original service level agreement will have a 12 year duration and that there would be a requirement for the management side to enter into an annual discussion with unions on the appropriate headcount.

There are very significant challenges facing local authority workers employed in water services and Congress will continue to work through the IWCG to provide that changes in the sector are secured through agreement.

Negotiation Committee of the Public Services Committee

During the period in review the officers and member of the PSC Negotiation Committee were as follows,

Chair	Shay Cody (IMPACT)
Vice-Chairs	Gene Mealy (SIPTU) Sheila Nunan (INTO)
Secretary	Tom Geraghty (PSEU)

Terence Casey (MLSA), John Clinton (POA), Walter Cullen (Unite), Liam Doran (INMO), Mike Jennings (IFUT), Pat Kavanagh (TEEU), Pat King (ASTI), Diarmuid Lynch (VOA), John MacGabhann (TUI), Greg Macken (BATU), Jim Moore (UCATT), Eoin Ronayne (CPSU), Dave Thomas (AHCPs) Steve Tweed (IBOA), Billy Wall (OPATSI), Liam Berney (Congress)

Minister Ged Nash said the Commission would be responsible for advising government of the appropriate hourly rate of the National Minimum Wage.



LOW PAY COMMISSION

In October 2014 the government announced the establishment of a Low Pay Commission. In announcing its establishment Minister Ged Nash said the Commission would be responsible for advising government of the appropriate hourly rate of the National Minimum Wage.

At the time of writing we understand that government intends to amend the Minimum Wage Act 2004 and replace the mechanisms in that legislation that provide for reviews of the hourly rate, with a new mechanism in which the Commission would make an annual recommendation to government on an appropriate rate.

In February 2015 Minister Nash formally appointed the members of the Low Pay Commission, listed in the table below:

Name	Title and Organisation
Donal de Buitléir	Chair of the Low Pay Commission
Patricia King	General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Gerry Light	Assistant General Secretary, MANDATE
Vincent Jennings	CEO, Convenience Stores and Newsagents Association
Caroline McEnery	Director Hr Suite, HR & Business Solutions
Edel McGinley	Director, Migrant Rights Centre
Mary Mosse	Lecturer in Economics, WIT Business School
Prof. Donal O'Neill	Dept. of Economics, NUI Maynooth

At the time of writing Congress was awaiting publication of legislation to give effect to this proposal.

WAGE SETTING MECHANISMS (JLCS)

The period under review saw further attacks on the processes and structures promoting collective bargaining.

Despite the enactment of legislation to restore the Joint Labour Committee (JLC) system, there were renewed attacks on the processes and structures promoting fair wages and conditions of employment. Employers in a number of key sectors boycotted the re-established JLCs and have thus totally frustrated the ability of the JLCs to conclude an Employment Regulation Order (ERO). Others have resorted to legal challenges to halt the operation of the JLCs.

In October 2013 the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, Richard Bruton, TD, published the report of the Labour Court's Review of the Joint

Labour Committee System. That review was carried out under Section 41A of the Industrial Relations Act (1946). This section, inserted by Section 11 of the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2012), requires a review of the JLCs on enactment and then after every five year interval.

The Minister accepted the majority of the recommendations made in the Labour Court Report and on the January 29, 2014 the Minister signed the necessary orders to:

Abolish, amend and establish the following Joint Labour Committees:

- Contract Cleaning:** This JLC was amended and established by Order (S.I. No. 25 of 2014 Contract Cleaning Joint Labour Committee Establishment (Amendment) Order 2014). This Committee has been established and is working towards concluding an Employment Regulation Order.
- Hairdressing:** This JLC was established with a reduced scope i.e to those workers in establishments which provide a hairdressing service only. (S.I. No. 26 of 2014 Hairdressing Joint Labour Committee Establishment (Amendment) Order 2014). This Committee is meeting and is working towards concluding an Employment Regulation Order. In addition, affiliates are seeking to progress a formal apprenticeship system for this sector.
- Security:** This JLC was established (S.I. No. 30 of 2014 Security Industry Joint Labour Committee Establishment (Amendment) Order 2014) at the time of writing SIPTU reported that the JLC was close to concluding an Employment Regulation Order.
- Hotels:** The Hotels JLC for outside of Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Cork was established. (S.I. No. 28 of 2014 Hotels Joint Labour Committee Establishment (Amendment) Order 2014)). However this JLC was the subject of a High Court challenge brought by the Irish Hotel Federation. The outcome of the challenge is that the Committee is frustrated in its proper operation.
- Retail Grocery & Allied Trades:** Legal advice obtained by the Minister during the drafting of

the proposed Order for the Retail Grocery JLC indicated that it would not be appropriate for the Minister to proceed with amending the scope of the Retail Grocery JLC, as recommended by the Labour Court. The effect is that the existing Establishment Order governing the Retail Grocery sector remains in place. However the employers have declined to nominate any members for the JLC and this has proved an effective veto on the operation of this JLC.

- **Catering** The Labour Court recommended that the existing scope and structures should remain in place. It was therefore not necessary for the Minister to make Orders in these instances. The Catering (Dublin and Dun Laoghaire)/Catering (Other) structures and scope were maintained but with the same Chair for the two JLCs. However this Committee is frustrated in its work as the employers have not made any nominations to the Committee.

- **Agricultural Workers:** The Labour Court review recommended that the JLC be retained for this sector with reduced scope. As the Agricultural Workers JLC was established under primary legislation (the Industrial Relations Act 1976), an amendment to the Establishment Order requires amending primary legislation. This process has yet to get underway.

Two Joint labour Committees were abolished, namely the Dublin Hotels and Law Clerks. (S.I. No. 27 of 2014 Hotels Joint Labour Committee (for the areas known, until 1st January, 1994, as the County Borough of Dublin and the Borough of Dun Laoghaire) (Abolition) Order 2014 and S.I. No. 29 of 2014 Law Clerks Joint Labour Committee (Abolition) Order 2014)

- **Agricultural Workers:** The Labour Court review recommended that the JLC be retained for this sector with reduced scope. As the Agricultural Workers JLC was established under primary legislation (the Industrial Relations Act 1976), an amendment to the Establishment Order requires amending primary legislation. This process has yet to get underway.

PART II

THE CONSEQUENCES OF INEQUALITY

In June 2014, the independent policy think tank TASC invited the renowned French economist, Thomas Piketty, to Dublin. While some interest was anticipated nobody expected that 650 people would cram into the Croke Park Conference Centre to hear him speak.

Yet Piketty's work struck a chord with thousands of people in Europe concerned with the direction society is taking.

TASC has taken on the job of drilling down into the implications of inequality for Ireland. In a publication launched in March it forensically exposed the risks associated with failing to arrest inequality. http://www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/tasc_cherishing_all_equally_web.pdf

Its approach echoes President Michael D Higgins's call for an ethical economy to be fostered in Ireland. It is a call which will resonate with the work of Congress and the wider trade union movement. Congress organised the Ethical Workplace Initiative in response to President Higgins's call and a full report on that can be found elsewhere in this document.

Addressing economic inequality is important because we know that more equal societies perform better on a whole range of social indicators such as crime, health and educational attainment. More equal societies are also more stable and have better chances of stronger and more sustained economic growth. High concentrations of wealth and income can lead to disproportionate political power, and so more equal societies are better able to promote democracy and ensure the public interest is safeguarded in public policies.

All advanced economies are experiencing the same pressures that lead to growing inequality including widening wage disparities, technological change,

changes in household structure and increased international financial flows. However, inequality should not be seen as inevitable. Levels of inequality are not the same in every developed country.

Economic and social policy choices, including taxation and the provision of public services, produce different outcomes. Nor is there a trade-off between reducing inequality and achieving economic growth. Indeed there are strong arguments to show that more equal societies have strong and more sustainable economies.

There is a view that welfare, health and pensions are no longer affordable and will have to be greatly reduced because of ageing populations, rapid health inflation, etc. Yet societies are richer than ever and can afford to provide good social, health and education programmes, provided governments have the will and interest to do so.

Understanding economic inequality involves moving beyond the distribution of income and wealth. Economic inequality means inequality of people's material circumstances, relative to their needs. It recognises that people's material conditions are also determined by the taxes they pay, the public services they receive, the unpaid work they do and the costs they face.

People's need for goods and services changes over time, due to age, family composition, illness and other circumstances. Men and women may have different needs or face different costs because of the roles they typically take on or are ascribed in society.

Much of what determines people's earnings is a product of their social background and parental assets. Capacities such as intelligence, creativity, physical and social skills, motivation, persistence, confidence and inherited wealth are not distributed fairly. Therefore, institutions and policies that reduce inequality are a necessary part of an ethical economy.

Net income inequality in Ireland sits around the average for EU countries, but gross market income inequality is the worst of all members of the OECD, which is hardly where we want to be.

In Northern Ireland 27% of gross income accrues to the top 10% with little over 2% going to those in the

bottom 10%. Northern Ireland also saw the largest fall in incomes of any UK region and is now the lowest income region in the UK. While wages have been a factor in this decline the cuts to working-age benefits made by the Westminster government have also had a significant impact.

The Top 10 percent in Ireland received 34% of all taxable income today, up from 27% in the late 1970s. We need to ask at what point it is unacceptable for the minority at the top to have an ever greater share and what implications this would have for the great majority of the population.

Creating decent jobs with decent incomes is essential to reducing economic inequality, but it is only part of the story. Focussing exclusively on increasing money in people's pockets as a way of solving social problems is equivalent to 'one hand clapping.'

Putting more money in the hands of those who will spend it, namely those on lower incomes and those who are currently going without, will of course drive demand and create jobs, but only providing they are not hit by ever increasing costs for life's essentials.

In Northern Ireland some workers will have benefited from increases in the income tax threshold to £10,000. Unfortunately when the changes to indirect taxes and benefits are factored in the average family in Northern Ireland has seen a loss of 1.3% of income over the last five years. Further increases to the income tax threshold will benefit fewer and fewer low-paid workers in the coming years and the same low-paid workers will suffer most from further swingeing cuts to benefits.

In a market economy, public services are an important form of social solidarity and social cohesion. They play a huge part in how a person or family get by. While in Ireland we provide some universal services, and even some 'free' services, too often we require people to purchase services that would be subsidised or free of charge in other countries that have achieved better levels of economic equality and a higher quality of life.

It has been demonstrated that reduced investment in public services increases economic inequality, regardless of how income is distributed. The need to buy essential public services puts a burden on people and drives up their cost of living; Ireland's



cost of living is 20% more expensive than the EU average.

This is a particular problem for those on low incomes and exacerbates economic inequality. One example of the vicious cycle this can create is the impact of the lack of affordable care services, particularly childcare, resulting in unpaid care duties taking precedence over paid employment for many, especially women.

As one would expect, Ireland's current system of taxes and social protection payments goes some way towards reducing income inequality, but with only 65% of Irish adults in work, with one in five workers on low pay, and with a low overall tax take, the system is stretched to breaking point for lack of resources. For that reason, calls from all sides of the political spectrum in Ireland to cut taxes instead of proposing significant investment in public services, if acted upon, will entrench economic inequality and is to mislead the public about the negative consequences of such an approach. 'Tax-cutting' should not be confused with 'tax equity' or with delivering a better society, whatever about the perceived electoral value.

Cutting taxes leads inexorably to a 'low-tax triangle', where a low level of taxes results in a lack of investment in public services, thereby undermining the value or usefulness of these services for people. This policy has reduced Ireland's overall taxes to less than 30% of GDP, one of the lowest in the EU, and has

delivered weak public social services, most visible in the lack of childcare and pre-school education as well as weaknesses in the health system.

A person's ability to flourish depends on the support they receive from others, and is affected by the support they give to others, most frequently children or older people.

Some people can rely on family for support, while others cannot. People with dependants or care responsibilities clearly need more support. These differences cannot be addressed in the wage structure, but must be addressed in a public policy that ensures that the necessary additional supports are accessible as and when needed. Policies that do not take this into consideration make society more unequal.

ACHIEVING EQUAL PAY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

According to recent European Commission reports, the pay gap between men and women remains significant. Congress has expressed its disappointment at the lack of ambition and action from government and European Commission on this issue.

For example, on average across the EU women work 59 days unpaid per year. Ireland's gender pay gap stands at 14.4%, below the EU average of 16.4%, but up from 13.9% since 2013.

The reasons that give rise to this are well-documented: a proliferation of temporary, insecure, part-time employment together with poor levels of maternity pay, the low status and value given to women's jobs and the tendency for women to be clustered at the bottom of grading structures in low paying sectors of the economy.

The voluntary approach favoured by governments and employers is not working.

Now is the time to move beyond rhetoric towards effective, practical solutions. Equal opportunities laws and efforts to reduce the gender pay gap have clearly failed and Congress continues to demand urgent action to address pay inequality.

From a trade union perspective, if the government is serious in seeking to reduce inequalities and the gender pay gap they should actively promote collective bargaining.

The period under review also saw the finalisation of a new ETUC resource on this issue: "Bargaining for Equality: How collective bargaining contributes to eliminating pay discrimination between women and men performing the same job or job of equal value".

The report documents trade union tools and instruments to reduce the gender pay gap, with a specific emphasis on the role of collective agreements. It shows how trade unions have approached the issue of gender pay inequalities in collective bargaining and gives examples of successful agreements at sectoral and company levels, as well as the challenges faced by trade unions in the context of the increasingly difficult bargaining climate arising from the ongoing economic crisis.

Congress participated at an Equinet High level conference on gender equality in Brussels, on June 27, 2013, which discussed the gender pay gap.

In Northern Ireland, for full-time employees there is no gender pay gap. There are many reasons for this, but one of the main reasons is the proportion of total employment in Northern Ireland that is

Caption



within the public sector. The public sector tends to provide more flexible working arrangements and a greater degree of collective bargaining which all play key roles in securing better outcomes for female employees. In Northern Ireland the public sector gender pay gap is actually -4.6%, indicating that the median female public sector wage is higher than that of males. This compares to a 20% gender pay gap within the private sector. Efforts to re-balance the Northern Ireland economy toward private sector employment all but ignore the equality implications that this will have.

CAMPAIGN FOR A LIVING WAGE

In 2012, Eurostat – the European Statistics Agency – published its analysis of the 2010 EU-wide Labour Force Survey.

It classified just over one in five workers in Ireland as low-paid (20.7% of the labour force), meaning that they earned below a low pay threshold of €12.20 per hour – a figure equivalent to 66% of national median hourly earnings. They also found that low pay is more common among women, those with low education levels and workers with fixed duration contracts.

Northern Ireland has a significant and persistent problem with low pay. In 2014 10% of workers earned at, or in some cases, below the minimum wage. Over 16% of workers in Northern Ireland earn two thirds of the median wage or less, and are classified as low paid. More startlingly 28% of workers in Northern Ireland earn below the Living Wage. The Living

Wage in Northern Ireland is the Non-London UK rate calculated by researchers at the University of Loughborough and is set at £7.85. Industries such as Accommodation & Food, Wholesale & Retail and Social Care account for some of the highest incidences of low pay.

The latest available CSO poverty figures (for 2013) were published in January 2015 and indicate that of all those in poverty, some 11.7% are working – the group known as the working poor. They represent about 85,000 workers.

The latest Quarterly National Household Survey data show that there are almost 125,000 workers ‘underemployed’ – working part-time, but not working as many hours as they would like. This is bound to have a negative impact on their income.

The distribution of direct income in the Republic of Ireland (earnings from all sources) is heavily skewed.

The data for 2013 show this pre-distribution of income is such that the top two deciles (10% groups) receive more than 50% of all direct income and the top three deciles receive more than 67% of all income.

The top 20% receive 25 times the share of the bottom 20% of the population. The scale of the inequality continues to place large pressures on the redistributive system, to even out the income distribution. This pressure falls most on the social welfare system.

The latest Department of Social Protection annual report shows that in 2013, the number of working families in receipt of Family Income Supplement (FIS) increased by almost 30%, rising to 42,000 low-income families, supporting over 90,000 children.

Figures such as these – in states across the EU – have focused attention on the adequacy of peoples’ earnings, in particular the problem of low pay.

The attention given to this issue underscores a growing appreciation for society to consider low wage rates not just in the context of competitiveness and competition, but also in the context of income adequacy and living standards.

It reflects a belief that people in full-time work should be able to earn enough income to enjoy a decent standard of living.

The Living Wage Technical Group was set-up in 2014 with the objective of establishing a transparent, robust and sustainable means of determining a Living Wage for Ireland.

The group’s members included NERI, the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, Social Justice Ireland, TASC, UNITE and SIPTU.

Over a period of months the group developed a methodology, based on the available data in Ireland and the precedents and lessons in the international research literature, and published that methodology alongside a 2014 value for a Living Wage in July 2014. The documents are available on the Living Wage website <http://www.livingwage.ie/>

The Living Wage figure established for 2014 was €11.45 per hour.

The figure is the average gross salary which will enable people in full time employment across Ireland to afford a socially acceptable standard of living. That standard of living covers spending across 17 categories of expenditure, covering up to 2,000 goods and services, and takes into account the structure of the taxation and social protection systems.

The calculations, which draw on the Minimum Essential Standard of Living analysis of the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice, were completed for the country as a whole, with expenditure figures calculated for Dublin, other cities, towns with populations of more than 5,000 and rest of Ireland, including small towns and rural Ireland. The results from this analysis were then brought together to establish the national figure.

The group plans to update the Living Wage figure on an annual basis.

A research paper published by NERI in 2014 detailed some of the impacts and challenges arising from the introduction of a Living Wage:

- There are impacts on the individual or the employee both in terms of income gains and consequent improvements in living standards for them and their family. This should not be



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Caption

underestimated, for example a €1 per hour increase in the pay of a full-time low waged worker is equivalent to a gross income gain of €2,033 per year – a multiple of any possible budgetary change to social protection or taxation levels.

- There are impacts for employers whose wage bills will increase, something that the research literature shows is of limited consequence in sectors such as finance, banking and construction where there are few earners already below the living wage threshold and so any increase in costs is small. In sectors with a greater proportion of low paid employees (such as retail, food production, bars and restaurants) the wage bill impact is likely to be more pronounced and it would seem sensible that any move to a Living Wage in these sectors would be phased in.
- The research literature also points towards impacts for employers in terms of cost savings and gains from increases in staff retention, reduced absenteeism and improvements in productivity and efficiency. While these may not fully offset the increased wage costs in the high labour sectors, the research literature points towards them making a significant contribution towards reducing these costs.

There are also impacts on the state which gains through increased taxation, particularly indirect taxation, reductions in social protection expenditure, and increases in both employers and employees social insurance contributions.

The implementation of a Living Wage is likely to be a gradual and voluntary process.

In some sectors, where there are only small numbers of employees below the threshold (eg finance), achieving increases should be possible and the international research shows little or no impact for these companies. For example, there is no reason why the IFSC could not become a Living Wage Zone.

There are greater challenges in labour intensive low-pay sectors (retail, accommodation etc) where a phased approach to achieving a living wage is more doable. Similarly, local authorities, like in other countries, should take a leadership role and ensure their employees and contracted workers are all paid at least the Living Wage.

The experience elsewhere is that the idea of a Living Wage evolves over time from 'impossible' to 'societally beneficial'.

AD

SECTION 3
CREATING JOBS,
ACHIEVING
GROWTH



3

The following is an extract from the forthcoming work by Tom Healy of NERI, on developing a new socio-economic model for the island of Ireland

SETTING A VISION FOR IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Well-being ought to be at the core of economic and social policy....

In considering a vision for Europe it is important to focus on all aspects of human well-being and not just those aspects that fall within the current scope and definition of Gross Domestic Product, or indeed, those areas of economic activity that are readily measurable or capable of being transformed into monetary value estimates. Canadian economist Lars Osberg (2001) was instrumental in pioneering the term economic well-being which is composed of four components:

- current per capita consumption flows;
- changes in capital stocks (including natural and human) with an adjustment for an estimated social cost of environmental degradation;
- changes in income distribution; and
- changes in economic risks (as measured by economic insecurity from unemployment, ill health, single parent poverty or poverty in old age.)

A challenge for the future is whether an improvement in human well-being – understood as a broader concept than just measuring money, income or GDP – can be assured while critical dimensions of our social, human and natural environment are under threat. A commitment to investment and growth in GDP – as it is currently measured and composed – may be viewed as both desirable and unavoidable to get people back to work and to address household and government debt mountains. However, in the long-term (the coming decades) pressure on natural resources including fossil fuels allied to the clear evidence on rising global temperatures mean that an alternative model of development is needed. For individuals, families and communities this could mean greater flexibility of paid working hours, a different sharing of caring work in the community and at home and a shift in lifestyles and modes of consumption and production.

Given that both parts of the island of Ireland are closely connected with the world economy and, in particular, the European economy, it is important to consider the current state and direction of political economy in the European Union. From an initial cautious project to integrate the markets of six European countries in the 1950s in the wake of a huge tragedy that was World War II, the initiative has developed to a point where 28 states are members of what is now called the European Union. It is a political and economic project encompassing 500 million citizens and over 20% of global economic activity. The Union includes a diverse range of countries, of which 14 member states were not Western parliamentary democracies in 1970. The move to create a single currency – the Euro – in 2002 with attendant integration of monetary policies and strict oversight of fiscal policies has signalled important shifts in the degree to which any member state can adopt policies or laws at variance with those agreed by international treaty or by the rules and laws of the European Union and its various institutions.

A key challenge for any society is to enable all of its citizens to provide for themselves the goods and the means to live a life that they value. Individual freedom, family and community bonds and civic rights and responsibility are vital and indispensable elements of human well-being. Research on the determinants of individual well-being place huge emphasis on the role of employment and strong inter-personal ties among other factors. The two are related. Creating and sustaining employment that provides for human need and dignity must be a primary goal of any society focussed on the well-being of all its members. But care is needed in not defining employment too narrowly as activity orientated towards paid work. Political economy is about all types of economic behaviour including non-paid but vital work to care for others and contribute to the community. That said, paid work in what economists call the 'labour force' is vital to social progress.

The European project is under strain....

Membership by Ireland and the UK of the European Economic Community in 1973 had a profound impact on the economies and societies of these countries. Many of the improvements in social and labour market conditions have been associated with membership of the European Union – notwithstanding opt-outs by the UK in some areas

Caption



of social and labour market policy. The enlargement of the European Community over the years as well as the shift in political balance from the 1980s onwards has drawn the European Union towards a model of political economy that is seen to be strong on competition, deregulation and fiscal orthodoxy and weak on social aspects of economic policy. The dominance of fiscal conservatism, especially from 2010 onwards, in response to the financial crisis of 2008-2009 has placed huge strains on European solidarity. It has also been accompanied by a rise in 'inter-governmentalism' to the detriment of a 'union of equals'. Although parts of Ireland benefited economically, politically and culturally from membership of the European Union (or its preceding names) over many decades the crisis of 2008-2010 brought into sharp relief three developments:

- The dominance of particular national capital interests to the detriment of European solidarity in deciding who would share the burden of the Republic of Ireland's failed banking system;
- The ascendancy of a neo-liberal ideology which governed the various 'reforms' of labour markets and public finances in the subsequent 'bailout' or adjustment programme of the Troika; and
- The weakness of national policy in 2010 making following irresponsible policies in regards to lending, tax-cutting and deregulation or light-touch regulation in the years immediately prior to 2008 allied to the equally irresponsible lending by British, German, French and US banks on the wholesale banking markets during the boom years.

Writing in 2011, Kirby and Murphy (2011: 159) described the Irish experience of Europe in the following terms:

The burden being imposed on Irish taxpayers to ensure that European banks get repaid for their risky investments at the cost of a lengthy period of severe austerity for Irish citizens shows the extent to which the EU now functions as a mechanism for protecting the economic interests of large companies rather than the social interests of citizens.

Recent trends across the European Union are of concern especially as elected governments in some cases have been replaced by mainly technocratic administrations subject to much larger external surveillance and pressure than ever before. If the international markets for borrowed funds are not enough to discipline particular countries then various international bodies are mobilised to enforce a range of policy innovations that lead to an erosion in social solidarity and a privatisation of the public sphere.

As in other parts of the world, Scandinavian countries are subject to intense competition and global pressure on all fronts making it a challenge to maintain high levels of tax and welfare provision (with the expansion of the European Union to include new accession countries from 2004 onwards the weight of the EU has moved even further to the right).

...different models of capitalism can co-exist within the European Union.

Different 'varieties of capitalism' co-exist within the European Union (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Yet, it appears that a combination of internal political pressure (internal, that is, to the Union) and the continuing external pressure of globalisation and what is referred to as 'neo-liberalism' is wearing down the edges between different 'models'. The 'Nordic' model is used to refer to those Scandinavian countries that have distinguished themselves in regards to social and economic policy. The model is under huge pressure as some of the Scandinavian countries move towards greater inequality and a smaller state while Governments in other jurisdictions (notably the United Kingdom) are seeking to resist European social norms in areas such as the labour market, investment and governance. The

developing political detachment of the UK from some of the EU framework is, perhaps, one of the most significant developments that poses challenges for the Republic of Ireland. The possibility of a British exit from the European Union – hardly conceivable in previous times – also casts a shadow over cross-border relationships within Ireland.

The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have diverged in significant areas of social policy over recent decades as the latter is part of a changing political economy across the United Kingdom, while the Republic experienced significant changes and some improvement in social conditions and public services in the period leading up to 2008.

Economic and social policy in the Republic of Ireland differs, markedly from that in Scandinavian countries. Its policies in regards to the labour market, social insurance, taxation, business regulation and governance together with some aspects of public services and collective bargaining resemble more that of the 'Anglo-American' world. However, significant differences exist. Some aspects of the European welfare state have been incorporated into social policy in the Republic of Ireland, while Northern Ireland has benefited from the application of the post-War British welfare state even if significant components of it have been reformed and scaled back in recent decades.

...and the Nordic social model is under strain too.

In the past, it has been possible in the Scandinavian countries to build on a strong social compact involving high levels of cooperation, social protection and dynamism. But, this model is increasingly under strain due to the global pressure to reduce business costs and shrink the size of the public sphere as well as liberalise the use and movement of capital and labour across national boundaries. National models of production, consumption, distribution and regulation seem less relevant than before. Looking into the 'Nordic' model more closely reveals important changes to this approach in recent decades. Some analysts interpret this as adaptation and reform to better reflect new conditions and needs, while others take a less benign view (Wahl, 2011). The re-formulation of the Nordic welfare state is seen, by the latter group of observers, as part of a global trend towards a smaller state and privatisation of public goods and services.

It should be noted that there is no single 'Nordic' model as each Scandinavian country has adopted a somewhat different mix or approach to a given area of social policy.

The 'Rehn-Meidner model' merits consideration. This 'model' was developed by two Swedish economists – Gosta Rehn and Rudolf Meidner – working for the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions in the early 1950s. Erixson (2008) has described some of the main features of the model in the following terms:

- A restrictive fiscal policy combined with restrictive monetary policy to increase public saving and control inflation;
- Active labour market policy (ALMP) encompassing retraining and mobility to upskill and ensure engagement in the labour market;
- Selective demand-stimulating policy when there is a shortfall in aggregate demand;
- A coordinated wages policy based on the principles of solidarity and equality of pay for equal jobs (regardless of the profitability of firms); and a
- Central job evaluation to determine 'fair' wage differentials.

The background for the post-war Rehn-Meidner model was the situation in Sweden in the years immediately following World War II. This period was characterised by a movement towards full employment in Sweden through expansionary fiscal and monetary policies as well as the implementation of an incomes policy (entailing price controls and collective wage restraint), devaluation of the Swedish Kroner and selective fiscal policy measures to fight inflation or the negative effects of overheating on the current account. It is important to recall that Sweden had undergone severe industrial and labour conflict in the 1930s arising from which a combination of social agreement and the entry of Swedish social democracy to government occurred.

The aim was not to replace capitalism with socialism but, rather, to make capitalism work in a way that promoted economic growth with the benefits of growth more fairly distributed, while maintaining social cohesion, industrial peace, price stability and

full employment (aside from frictional or temporary periods of unemployment in between jobs and training). In light of developments since the 1950s, the above points hardly appear radical or disruptive. Even though the model, which was also reflective of similar trends in most other Scandinavian countries at the time, has been adapted, revised and in some respects scaled back, it remains an important benchmark. The 'model' to the extent that it was applied in Sweden in the period of the 1950s up to the first oil crisis in 1973 was broadly successful in helping to ensure economic growth, greater social equality and fiscal, monetary and price stability. Wage inequality remained low and the scale and quality of public services as well as lifelong learning provision was very good (as evidenced for example by recent surveys of skills in the adult population). Although difficult to prove causality, it does appear that countries with higher levels of economic equality combined with democracy show high levels of human well-being and happiness and lower levels of social dysfunction.

As Erixson has noted, many aspects of the Rehn-Meidner Model have been modified or even entirely abandoned in the 1980s and 1990s in Sweden. However, along with other Scandinavian countries, Sweden remains a high-productivity, high-wage and relatively egalitarian society with a good level of public services compared with many other European countries – especially Ireland. The 'Nordic model' (if it is possible to speak of a single 'model'), however, is coming under increasing pressure due to the impact of globalisation, mobility of capital and the political shifts within Europe.

The onset of recession and austerity policies across the continent and the developing crisis in political parties that form part of the social democratic family has opened up a political vacuum the filling of which poses many unanswered questions. With the demise of the large-scale communist parties in France, Italy and other countries, as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union and associated countries in 1989-1991, there is no longer a series of strong organised political forces capable of resisting the advance of an aggressive neo-liberalism – especially within the European Union. In most countries trade unions, for a variety of reasons, have been weakened through falling numbers as well as political influence to counter-act the worst excesses of economic liberalism. Writing in the *New Statesman*, recently, Neal Lawson (2014) has commented:

Instead of more things we didn't know we wanted, paid for with money we don't have, to impress people we don't know, social democrats are going have to talk about more of other things – more time, public space, clean air, community and autonomy. This suggests a politics of working time limits, workplace democracy and ownership, a citizen's income and stringent carbon controls.

There is a fundamental challenge in a society where the interests of corporations and global financial capital are very frequently prioritised over communities. The extension of public control over decision-making necessarily leads us to consider the extension of public control over economic and financial activity as a means of improving and deepening real democracy in our society.

The 'Rehn-Meidner' model has inspired public policy across Scandinavia.

Some echoes of the Rehn-Meidner model may be found in the use of 'flexicurity' in Denmark. Flexicurity combines flexibility in the labour market (loss and regaining of employment in a different enterprise or sector), social security in regards to income and an active labour market policy with obligations and rights for the unemployed. To work, such an arrangement requires adequate taxation (sometimes through systems of social insurance but also through general taxation), high levels of protection of income and employment, sufficient training opportunities and, not least of all, a high degree of social cooperation and buy-in by the key actors.

A strategy to promote human well-being and to place it at the centre of economic and social policy implies a stronger role for the state in moderating the impact of markets in regards to income, employment and the distribution of social goods and services. A European public service, fit for purpose needs to be built on four pillars:

- **Full employment** with a sufficiently high proportion of the workforce in quality jobs that pay an adequate wage;
- **Sufficient and sustainable investment** in physical, human and social capital to support employment and income

- **Dynamic enterprise** culture that embraces public, private and voluntary organisations

- **Economic and political democracy** that puts citizens and workers at the centre of organisational governance and political institutions.

A policy in pursuit of full employment needs to attend to:

- Optimising the proportion of people in any given age-cohort that are in employment
- Minimising, and eventually, eliminating the proportion of workers earning less than 60% of median earnings from employment
- Upgrading skills across the working-age population to a minimum standard of education equivalent to upper secondary education with an emphasis on a range of life and work skills appropriate to each individual.

In 2013, on average across all European Member States, just over two out of three persons between the age of 20 and 64 were in employment. The proportion varies considerably from a high of 80% in Sweden to 53% in Greece at the lowest. The proportion, in the Republic of Ireland, was 66%, while that in Northern Ireland was 71%. It is suggested that a realistic medium-term goal is to achieve an average employment rate of 80% for the entire population 20-64 for both parts of Ireland.

PART II

ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE WORK & ACTIVATION MEASURES

Background

The underlying trend in unemployment is downwards and the numbers at work have now risen close to two million. The big issue now emerging is the quality opposed to the quantity of jobs on offer. Among the issues which dilute job quality are

false self-employment, uncertainty of hours, and the behaviour of some employment agencies. The taxpayer picks up the bill for this - through the social welfare system.

The standardised unemployment rate peaked at 15.1% in February 2012. It had fallen to 12% in February 2014 and 10.1% in February 2015. This represented a fall from 398,069 to 355,124. In addition there are approximately 85,000 participants on various labour market schemes. The current rate of decline means it will be spring 2020 before unemployment even reaches 5%.

Ireland's current unemployment rate is also considerably above the 8.3% rate of Western European (EU-15) non-programme countries (that is, excluding Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain).

Youth Employment

Across Europe, the increase in the share of unemployed young people has been significantly greater than for the older active population, since the economic downturn in 2008.

Rate of unemployment for those aged between 15 and 24 years of age

	Q3 2012.	Q3 2014
Ireland	31.1	23.7
EU	23.1	22.6

In the case of Ireland, the fall reflects the high rate of youth emigration as much as labour market improvement

Due to the large number of 15 to 24 year olds in education and training, the youth unemployment ratio is a more accurate reflection of reality than the rate quoted above.

Of particular concern is the level of NEETs - young people Not in Employment, Education or Training. This rate rose in all EU member states during the four years to the third quarter of 2012, except in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Romania. The first three countries have well developed apprenticeship systems. The largest surges were

seen in: Greece, Cyprus, Latvia and Ireland, where the rate of increase was 5.1%.

Even when young people gain employment they are more likely to be in insecure jobs and precarious work

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee aims to provide young people under the age of 25 with a quality offer of employment, education, training or apprenticeship within a short time of leaving education or becoming unemployed. It is an EU initiative developed in response to the youth unemployment crisis across Europe. The guarantee will be phased in during 2015 and will offer a place on a range of fifteen existing initiatives. Jobseekers under 25 who have been unemployed for over 12 months will be eligible to participate. Some 28,350 places were allocated to the guarantee, of which 60% are on three schemes Youthreach, FÁS/ Solas training and back to education allowance. At the end of 2014, some 21,101 youth guarantee places had been filled

Separately a youth guarantee pilot scheme was throughout the EU. In Ireland the pilot project was established in Ballymun, Dublin, to run for the duration of 2014. Congress was represented on the steering committee by Sylvia Ryan. One of the features of this pilot was the number of young people who had a blank CV but who desperately wanted to work. The additional EU resources allocated to this pilot allowed an intensive level of intervention which cannot be replicated elsewhere in the country, without a political decision to allocate resources accordingly.

A total of 679 people completed the Ballymun Project, from a complement of 739 who began the process. Overall, 593 people participated in training, work programmes or in were in employment, at the time of writing.

The Skills Challenge

The period under review witnessed the restructuring of the further education sector.

The number of Vocational Education Committees was halved, with 16 Education & Training Boards (ETBs) being formed.



These boards took over the FAS training centres in their respective regions. The ETBs will report to Solas, which will have the same relationship to them as the higher education authority has to the third level institutions. The main focus was on the development of an overarching strategy for Solas. Congress was represented on the Solas strategy committee by Peter Rigney and Eamon Devoy.

It remains the position of Congress that the development of the existing apprenticeship system in new sectors is one of the best ways to combat youth unemployment. European countries which have well developed apprenticeship systems have consistently lower rates of youth unemployment (see above).

Following on the setting up of Solas and the ETBs the minister for education set up an apprenticeship review group, and nominated the members. Peter Rigney was among those appointed. The group met on a number of occasions in late 2014, and reported to the minister. It recommended a framework for the establishment of new apprenticeships in sectors of the economy where they have not previously existed. An apprenticeship council has been established to oversee this process, and ninety proposals have been received and are currently under consideration. Congress is represented on the council by Eamon Devoy and Patricia King

The ETUC research project on apprenticeship continues, with Ireland among one of the countries being studied. We will report on the findings, when they become available.

Congress is represented on the expert group on future skill needs and on the board of Skillnets, by Peter Rigney.

Springboard

The period under review has seen the development of two initiatives to directly link jobseekers with the education and training system. The older initiative is Springboard which offers free, part time higher education courses at certificate degree or masters level. The programme is coordinated by the HEA and is targeted towards people employed in areas now experiencing significant structural unemployment.

Applicants must be in receipt of a social welfare payment, be signing for credits or be on an employment scheme such as CE. Springboard courses are aimed at people who have substantial work experience and who are receiving an unemployment payment who need a third level qualification to upskill or retrain in growth areas. Applications must be made through the Springboard website. The courses offered are targeted at sectors such as ICT and pharmaceuticals. Courses proposals are subjected to an evaluation process before being designated as springboard. As of Jan. 2015 there are 4609 participants on Springboard courses.

The Springboard initiative is replicated in the further education sector by the Momentum programme which provides up to 6,500 for individuals who are unemployed for 12 months or longer. The programmes are selected after a tendering process,

Caption



and must include a mix of on-the job training and classroom based learning. (<http://www.ictu.ie/centres/momentum-project.html>)

Providers from the private, community/ voluntary and public sector offer Momentum programmes. The sectors in which momentum programmes operate are Environment, ICT, Transport, Distribution and Logistics, Tourism, Financial Services, Manufacturing Technology, Personal Service, Sales & Marketing and Business Administration.

A specific number of places are ring-fenced for those under 25. Momentum is administered by Solas on behalf of the Department of Education. Access to Momentum courses is by way of nomination by Intreo Centres, or the Local Employment Service.

Unemployment & Activation

According to Eurostat, Ireland's unemployment rate in 2013, of 13.9%, was the seventh highest in the EU and above the EU average of 10.8%.

The long-term unemployment rate (those unemployed for a year or more) in Ireland was 8.1% in Ireland in 2013 and was the sixth highest in the EU after Greece, Spain Croatia Slovakia and Portugal. The average rate in the EU was 5.1%. The long-term unemployment rate for men in Ireland was 10.3%, compared to a rate of 5.3% for women. At EU level the rates for women and men were very similar.

The phrase 'activation' comes from the OECD. Originally it was located within the work of Rehn and Meidner, the Swedish trade union economists, and focussed on steering benefit systems away from just income support and towards active labour market

policies (ALMPs) which would include training and direct participants back into productive employment.

More recently the meaning of activation has subtly changed to mean an increased conditionality of benefits, with payment being linked to a proven record of 'active job seeking'.

During the period under review the Department of Social Protection has engaged in a lengthy contracting process - known as JobPath - to outsource engagement with long term unemployed people. This proposal has been the subject of arbitration under the provisions of the Haddington Road agreement. It is anticipated that it will commence operation in the latter half of 2015.

A number of commentators have said that the management of this process has presented other countries with considerable difficulties. One difficulty is that the threat of benefit sanction may force people into insecure low quality jobs, which do not provide a route out of poverty, and leave the workers still reliant on another part of the social protection system for an adequate income.

The other challenge will be the state's capacity to manage the contractors in order that the public good is maximised, rather than the profits of contractors. It has taken the Australian system almost two decades to achieve this.

The process will require vigilance from the trade union movement if labour standards are to be maintained. As a recent study observed:

"The evidence shows that many benefit recipients are activated to take low-wage jobs which do not offer great career prospects and which may not lift them and their families permanently out of poverty. So the aim of an effective activation regime should be not only to get people off benefits and into work, but also to help them access 'quality' jobs."

This remains a key challenge for Ireland.

Job Bridge

This scheme was introduced in July 2011. Participants may work for an employer for a period of up to nine months, in exchange for their social welfare payment and a top up of €50 per week.

Congress is not represented on the committee which monitors this scheme.

Job Bridge vacancies are monitored on a regular basis as are social media websites, and Congress maintains a continuing dialogue with DSP on the operation of the scheme.

Some 15,615 internships have commenced as at March 14, 2013 with 5,939 participants on an internship and 2,377 internship opportunities advertise as of that date. The interim evaluation of the scheme conducted by Indecon found that 61% of individuals who have participated in JobBridge progressed into employment within five months of completing their internship placements, although not necessarily in the enterprise where the placement was undertaken.

The final evaluation report is awaited at time of writing.

The monitoring of all these labour market schemes is the responsibility of the Labour Market Council. Marie Sherlock (SIPTU) is a ministerial appointment to the eleven member council

Social Welfare Developments

A major contribution to making work less attractive to jobseekers is the operation of the rent allowance scheme. This supports rent costs for those living in private rented accommodation.

Payments cease if a recipient takes up work. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAPS) Scheme has been introduced to combat this. This scheme resembles the differential rent scheme applicable to local authority tenancies.

When a person in receipt of HAPS moves into work, their payments are reduced on a phased basis.

The scheme commenced in September 2014 and is currently in operation in Cork County, Limerick City & County, Waterford City & County South Dublin, Louth, Monaghan and Kilkenny. It is planned to complete the nationwide rollout of the scheme during 2015.

The main change has been the Back To Work Family Dividend which will start in mid-2015. This will allow social welfare recipients to maintain their payment for the first year of employment.

In late 2013 the then EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Lazlo Andor, floated the idea of a Europe wide system of Social Welfare insurance, using the Bertelsmann foundation to conduct the research. The scheme, as proposed, would part fund unemployment insurance payments in times of recession.

The ETUC Working Group on Social Protection provides an effective forum for engagement on the issue policy at an EU level.

Image to be placed here

Caption

SECTION 4 PROGRESSING WORKPLACE RIGHTS





THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

Congress continues to be an active participant at International Labour Conference – the annual policy conference of the ILO – which is held in Geneva each year. The Worker Delegate in 2013 and 2014 was Ms Esther Lynch, Congress Legislative & Social Affairs Officer.

Mr John Douglas, Congress President, Mr Seamus Dooley and Mr Eamon Devoy, Congress Executive Council members, also took part in the conferences.

A major issue of concern to Congress and trade unions throughout the world is the attack by the employers group on the Right to Strike, at the ILO Committee on Application of Standards (CAS). This Committee is a cornerstone of the regular ILO supervisory system, the other being the Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA).

Since 2012, the employers' group has insisted that ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association does not guarantee workers any right to strike. In doing so they are denying decades of consistent jurisprudence and the employers own past support for the right to strike. Fundamentally, they are challenging the ILO's competency to interpret their own conventions.

Congress sought and received assurances from the Irish government that they would support the trade union request for the referral of the question to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.

At the time of writing trade unions were preparing for the March 2015 meeting of the ILO Governing Body and were campaigning for governments to ensure proper respect for the right to strike, nationally and internationally. If no agreement can be reached, the ITUC will demand a referral to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.

Developments in Collective Bargaining

Unions are an essential to the process of wealth redistribution and curbing inequality. The weaker unions are in any given society, the more unequal that society will inevitably be.

But it is critical to grasp the fact that union rights are also human rights.



Caption

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights recognises the right of all workers to join trade unions and to collectively bargain through those unions.

Similarly the European Convention on Human Rights recognises the right to collectively bargain as inherent in the right to freedom of association and obliges all member states to protect and promote this right.

No matter what form collective bargaining takes, it must comply with International Labour Organisation standards set out in ILO Conventions 87 and 98, on the right to freedom of association, the right to organise and collective bargaining.

In the UK, recognition is associated with meeting a threshold of union membership. This approach focuses on promoting firm level collective bargaining.

Other countries take a different approach and focus on collective bargaining at a sectoral level. This is often accomplished by extending collective agreements to cover all employers and employees in a given sector and is referred to as *erga omnes*.

Here at home, the recently published Industrial Relations Bill 2015 draws on both approaches but with some important differences, to take account of constitutional issues raised by the Supreme Court.

The Bill aims to deal with situations where the employer refuses to recognise the union by providing a mechanism whereby unions can seek to improve the workers conditions.

Only unions will be able to refer such claims about pay, terms and conditions to the Labour Court, which can make a decision based on comparisons with similar companies.

Employee representative bodies are precluded from taking this route. They are also excluded from the definition of collective bargaining when they are not genuinely independent or are dominated by the employer.

Where the pay and conditions are out of line with the going rate for a grade, group or category normally set by collective agreements, the union now has a means to secure improvements for the workers.

Critically, the Labour Court determination can be enforced by the union by way of Circuit Court order.

The Bill also provides that workers threatened with dismissal for exercising their right to join a union can now seek 'interim relief' from the courts, to prevent the dismissal occurring.

The Bill will also facilitate the creation of a new statutory framework to Registered Employment Agreements (REAs).

LRC Conciliation Service				
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of Referrals	1155	1054	1029	1149
Conciliation Conferences	1532	1350	1646	1467
Other Meetings	191	218	225	213

The legislation sets out a mechanism for the registration of employment agreements at individual enterprise level – with these collective agreements only legally binding on the signatories.

In addition, a new sectoral agreement can be created at the request - individually or jointly - of organisations ‘substantially representative’ of employers or workers.

The Labour Court can initiate a review of the pay, pension and sick pay entitlements of a group of workers in a particular sector and can make a recommendation to the Minister.

If the Minister is satisfied that the process as outlined in the legislation has been complied with, a sectoral employment order can be made. It will become binding across the relevant sector and enforceable via the new Workplace Relations Commission.

Congress has raised with the Minister the necessity of including trade unions in the monitoring and compliance of the agreements.

THE LEGAL STRATEGY GROUP

The Legal Strategy Group

The Congress Legal Strategy Group meets to discuss and coordinate complaints and upcoming cases. The group provides a platform for implementing Congress legal strategy including seeking joint legal opinions and making joint complaints including, in 2014, a complaint to the EU Commission on the incorrect transposition of the EU Working Time Directive. The complaint related specifically to the failure to properly provide a right to annual leave on foot of sick leave. The complaint resulted in legislative amendments being brought forward to improve workers entitlements. In addition, the group also prepares responses to government

consultations, analyses legislative proposals and prepares amendments that aim to ensure the various statutes properly respect worker and trade union rights.

Informal Insolvency & Workers’ Rights

The Paris Bakery and Connolly Shoes cases highlighted key failings in the manner in which workers in certain insolvency situations are treated. Sadly these are not isolated cases. All over the country businesses have closed and the workers left high and dry and significantly out of pocket.

Congress sought to improve the situation for those workers facing an ‘informal insolvency’ by seeking changes to the Insolvency Payments Scheme, specifically to allow access for workers in situations of ‘deemed insolvency’.

We argued that this was required to bring the scheme in line with the provisions of EU Directives 80/987 and 2002/74/EC and to give adequate protection to employees in the event of an ‘insolvency’, whereby the employer ceases trading but does not properly wind up the company.

The legislative basis for the Scheme is the Protection of Employees (Employers’ Insolvency) Acts, 1984 – 2004 and associated regulations, managed by the Minister for Social Protection. Disappointingly, despite a number of helpful meetings with the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection no progress had been made at the time of writing to address this glaring injustice.

THE LABOUR RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Labour Relations Commission (LRC) was established in 1990 with the aim of developing and improving industrial relations procedures and

The Labour Court						
Source of Referral	2009	2010	2011	2012	2103	2104
Conciliation	289	229	199	161	166	183
Rights Commissioner Appeals	537	555	528	538	472	465
Equality Appeals	74	88	67	72	70	53
Direct Referrals	162	135	135	167	200	146
Other	368	442	323	241	49	2
Total	1430	1449	1252	1179	957	849

practices in Ireland. The LRC provides a wide range of services including: a conciliation service, a Rights Commissioner Service and a workplace advisory service. The principle dispute resolution mechanism provided by the LRC is its conciliation service. The LRC is staffed by a number of highly professional conciliators who assist unions and their members to resolve what are often difficult and complex disputes. The table below sets out the work undertaken by the LRC Conciliation Service in the period under review.

The other main activity of the LRC is the provision of a Rights Commissioner Service. The Rights Commissioners adjudicate in disputes involving claims by individuals of breaches of their statutory rights, or rights they may have arising from their contract of employment or from a collective agreement. The table below sets out the work undertaken by the Rights Commissioner Service in the period under review,

Right Commissioner Service	
Year	Cases
2005	5500
2006	7179
2007	9077
2008	10978
2009	14569
2010	15671
2011	9206
2012	8852
2013	10252
2014	9800

The LRC is a statutory agency and is accountable to a Board. The Congress representatives on the Board are Fergus Whelan and Peter McLoone.

THE LABOUR COURT

The mission of the Labour Court is to “find a basis for real and substantial agreement through the provision of fair, informal and inexpensive arrangements for the adjudication and resolution of industrial disputes.”

The table below shows the number of cases dealt with by the Court over the period 2009 to 2014.

The worker members of the Labour Court are Linda Tanham, Jerry Shanahan and Andy McCarthy.

By the time the next biennial conference comes around – in 2017 - the LRC will have been subsumed into an entirely new body to be known as the Workplace Relations Commission and the work of the Employment Appeals Tribunal will be undertaken by the Labour Court.

REFORM OF THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS INSTITUTIONS

In the Executive Council Report to the 2013 BDC we noted that the government had published a consultation document on the reform of the industrial relations institutions of the state. The consultation document entitled a Blueprint to Deliver a World Class Workplace Relations Service proposed the most comprehensive reform of the workplace dispute resolution system, in the history of the state.

Following the 2013 Biennial Delegate Conference discussions began on this programme of reforms. In essence, this entailed the consolidation of a number of dispute bodies creating a single body of first instance. The Workplace Relations Commission, when established, will take over the functions of the Labour Relations Commission, the Employment Appeals Tribunal, the Equality Authority and the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA).

In a further reform the Labour Court would be given the responsibility for hearing all appeals from the Workplace Relations Commission, while also continuing the roles ascribed to it under the various industrial relations acts. The government published the Workplace Relations Bill 2014, in August 2014. This Bill was to give effect to the reforms and Congress welcomed its publication.

The Bill provided a number of options for workers and their unions, with regard to dispute resolution.

A Case Resolution Officer or a Mediator offer alternative ways of resolving disputes without the need for adjudication, but participation is not obligatory. Either party can decide that they would prefer for the matter to be adjudicated by an Adjudication Officer.

Private Hearings

The existing role of the Rights Commissioners and Equality Officers will be transferred to the Adjudication Officers.

The Adjudication Officers will hear complaints about breaches of employment law and cases referred under the Industrial Relations Acts. Complaints will be heard in private - this provision was supported by Congress as this has long been a feature of the Rights Commissioners Service.

Workers told us that this was a critical aspect of the existing service and that it was important to preserve it, in particular where the employment relationship is ongoing.

Another dimension brought to our attention by affiliates was that workers increasingly report that they are subject to background checks - including online searches - by prospective employers or recruitment agencies and, regardless of the merit or

outcome of their case, many are genuinely fearful of blacklisting.

In a significant change to established procedure - whereby social partners nominated Rights Commissioners - the Adjudication Officers will in future be recruited by way of open competition. Congress stressed the need to ensure a balanced representation from all sides of industry among the Adjudicators and the Minister agreed to establish three panels: a legal panel, a HR panel and an industrial relations panel.

Appeals currently heard by the EAT will be transferred to the Labour Court. Appeals will be heard in public and decisions will, in general, be published. Labour Court decisions are appealable to the High Court, but only on a point of law. Current Labour Court members will continue in their role, and a new division will be recruited for the Labour Court by way of open competition.

When enacted the legislation should also improve the enforcement of awards.

In the all too familiar circumstances where an employer fails to comply with the decision of an Adjudication Officer or the Labour Court, the worker's union will be able to apply to the District Court for an order directing the employer "to carry out a decision in accordance with its terms."

Securing Changes

The Workplace Relations Bill necessitated amendments to 22 primary Acts, 12 specified parts or sections of Acts and 71 statutory instruments.

Congress arranged a number of briefings for affiliated unions to explain the proposed legislation and to identify possible problems with the proposed approach.

The Legal Strategy Group played an instrumental role in securing a number of key amendments to the Bill as published - in particular the right of workers to be represented by their trade union and the removal of the proposed cap on awards.

Congress also ensured that the power - on the part of an Adjudication Officer and the Labour Court - to dismiss claims it considers frivolous or vexatious, would not apply to cases referred under

Year	Number of Disputes	Firms Involved	Workers Involved	Total Days Lost
2010	14	14	511	6602
2011	8	8	1384	3695
2012	5	5	1902	8486
2013	12	12	11924	14965
2014	11	11	31665	44015

Source: CSO

the IR Acts. At the time of writing Congress was lobbying for the removal of the section of the Bill that would allow the introduction of fees for taking employment rights cases.

The Bill also increases the powers of the labour inspectors. When enacted Inspectors will be empowered to issue on-the-spot fines ('fixed payment notices') to employers, of up to €2,000. These can be issued for: failing to produce wage statements to employees, failing to provide employees with a written statement of their hourly rate of pay for a pay reference period or failing to notify the Minister of proposed collective redundancies. Inspectors will also be able to issue Compliance Notices to compel employers to rectify contraventions of certain employment laws relating to, for instance, an unlawful deduction of wages, failing to provide employees with a contract of employment or written disciplinary procedures, and certain breaches of working time rights.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS & DISPUTES

In this section we review the major industrial relations disputes that occurred during the period and the main topics for discussion that arose between unions and employers.

Industrial Disputes Data

During the period under review we saw an increase in the number of industrial disputes and the number of days lost due to industrial action. The table below shows that in both 2013 and 2014 the number of days lost due to industrial action increased

significantly, when compared with the previous three years.

SIGNIFICANT DISPUTES IN THE SEMI-STATE SECTOR & PRIVATE SECTOR

In the period under review we have seen a number of very significant disputes. In this report we have focused on some of the main disputes as these tend to be generally reflective of the issues and disputes in other employments.

Public Transport

In all three of the **CIE companies - Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Irish Rail** - there were disputes over management proposals for temporary pay reductions. The management proposals arose from what it claimed was a significant fall in passenger numbers and a general reduction in the subvention given to the companies by the National Transport Authority for the running of Public Service Obligation (PSO) routes.

While the disputes in the three companies were referred to the Labour Relations Commission and in turn to the Labour Court, there were strikes in each of the companies when management sought to unilaterally impose these measures.

In the case of **Dublin Bus**, following the rejection of Labour Court Recommendations and after a number of days of strike action, Noel Dowling and Ultan Courtney were appointed to make recommendations to the parties as to what might be done in order to

resolve the disputes. Their appointment was made at the suggestion of Congress and IBEC.

While the management proposals, or versions of them, were never formally accepted by all of the unions, the issue ceased to be a matter of dispute as what was eventually implemented by management did not result in further industrial action.

In 2015 a further dispute arose in Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann over plans by the National Transport Authority to put 10% of the routes of these companies out to competitive tender. SIPTU was concerned that if this could result in members would be forcibly transferred to private sector providers, on lesser terms and conditions and with insecure contracts of employment. They were also concerned about that over time all of the routes operated by the companies could be put out to competitive tendering. The dispute resulted in a two day strike in both bus companies. Proposals that addressed the issues raised by SIPTU were subsequently developed resulting in the resolution of the dispute.

Aviation Sector

In the **Aviation Sector** the issue of pension provision continued to a major concern. The restructuring of the IASS scheme (the pension scheme of which most employees in **Aer Lingus, the Dublin Airport Authority and the Shannon Airport Authority** are members) continued.

While the restructuring has been ongoing for some time in the period under review, there were a number of significant developments. These included:

- The Labour Courts Recommendation relating to both employments proved impossible to implement as a key element could not be realised following a decision of the Pensions Board and a subsequent decision of the trustee of the scheme to cut benefits for active members of the scheme;
- In order to try and find a comprehensive resolution and at the suggestion of Congress and IBEC, an Expert Panel was established. The Expert Panel issued a report on the June 16, 2014, which recommended an increased contribution by both employers to the resolution of the dispute along with other measures;

■ The Expert Panel's recommendations In the case of Aer Lingus were accepted by SIPTU, IMPACT and TEEU, in an aggregate ballot of members;

■ In December 2014 the Pension Authority granted a Section 50 order to the trustee of the IASS which resulted in reduced benefits for members and a freezing of the scheme as and from 31st December 2014.

At the time of there were continued ongoing discussions relating to the aspects of the Expert Panel's report, as it affected the DAA and SAA.

There was also a significant dispute in **Shannon Aerospace** relating to pension provision.

The dispute concerned a management proposal to close the defined pension scheme and replace it with a defined contribution scheme, for all future service. Following their intervention the Labour Relations Commission issued revised proposals which were accepted.

The period under review also saw a significant dispute between **Aer Lingus and IMPACT Cabin Crew**, on the issue of rosters. Although a recommendation by the Labour Court setting out a general framework for the resolution of the issues in dispute was accepted, at the time of writing there were still issues to be resolved.

At a policy level there were three major developments in the aviation sector.

The first was the publication by government in 2013 of a proposal for a **National Aviation Policy**.

Following the publication of the government proposal Congress organised a conference to consider the policy proposals and to formulate a comprehensive response.

The Congress Conference was addressed by the then Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Leo Varadkar TD. In the summer of 2013, Congress published a response to the government's proposals.

Following consideration by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport of submissions received they published revised proposals and sought the views of interested parties.

Congress made a further submission and at the time of writing, we were still awaiting the publication of the government policy.

The second key development was a proposal by the **Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) for reduced landing charges at Dublin Airport.**

In the Congress submission we argued that sufficient account had not been taken by the CAR in the requirement to update the airport's infrastructure, of the requirement to maintain high levels of security and to provide for the costs of pension restructuring.

Although some of the views expressed by Congress were taken account of by the CAR in its final determination, they have determined that the charges that can be levied by the DAA in Dublin are to be reduced year on year, over five years.

The third issue that arose was the bid by IAG to take over Aer Lingus. The bid has brought into sharp focus the issues around connectivity and the value of the landing slots controlled by Aer Lingus at Heathrow airport.

Although the Board of Aer Lingus has accepted the IAG offer it is conditional on acquiring 100% of the shares including the Government's 25.1% shareholding. At the time of writing the government had asked an inter-departmental group to advise them on the sale.

For their part, the unions and Congress have publicly stated that they have heard no convincing case for the sale of the government's stake, citing concerns about connectivity, the erosion of the Aer Lingus brand and job security.

Semi-State Sector

Industrial relations in **the energy sector** were dominated by two major issues. The first was a dispute regarding the status of the **ESB pension scheme** and its accounting treatment. Following an intervention by the LRC, a formula suggested by them was accepted by the ESB and the group of unions.

The second issue was the decision of government to sell the energy division of Bord Gais Eireann. As a result of the sale a number of employees transferred

to the employment of the new owner with their terms and conditions intact.

As part of the further government decision, **Bord Gais Eireann** was given responsibility for the development of Irish Water. The staff of the new company was drawn from Bord Gais Eireann, the local authorities and other parts of the public service, with some recruited directly. Congress was involved in concluding a recognition agreement for the appropriate unions in Irish Water. (see also Public Sector Developments below) (AMEND HEREXXX)

The sale of the **National Lottery** franchise by government saw An Post enter into a partnership with the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP), owner of the Camelot Group, to form Premier Lotteries Ireland (PLI).

Private Sector Disputes

In the private sector there were a number of notable disputes. The 14 week dispute at **Greyhound Recycling & Recovery** was caused by the employer seeking to unilaterally change the terms and conditions of the SIPTU members in the company.





When the workers involved refused to accept the proposed changes they were locked out of their workplace. In the ensuing dispute the employer attempted to break the will of striking workers by using agency workers to carry on its business and the courts to curtail the legitimate protests of those in dispute.

It was eventually settled when proposals emerged which allowed workers a range of options, including future employment with the company on their current terms and conditions of employment.

In 2013 / 2014 a national dispute in the **electrical contracting sector** commenced following a decision of the employers to refuse to pay rates that had been agreed as part of the Registered Employment Agreement (REA).

The dispute was settled when the main employer organisations in the sector made a commitment to the TEEU that the rates would be paid.

However, it was not clear if all of the employers would be bound by the terms of the settlement and the TEEU reserved the right to commence disputes with individual employers.

In May 2014 one of the main employers in the South East **Bausch & Lomb** announced their intention to review the viability of their Waterford operation, hinting at the possible closure of the plant with the loss of close to 1000 jobs if cost savings were not achieved.

Following intensive negotiations, chaired by the LRC, a set of proposals was put to the workforce and they were accepted. Crucial to the consideration of the proposals was a commitment by Bausch & Lomb's parent company that they would invest in the Waterford facility and, in November 2014, the company duly announced a €41 million investment in the plant.

Meanwhile, the construction sector saw a 20 week strike in **Rattigan's Construction**, which centered on a demand by the workers to be paid the appropriate rates. The dispute was resolved following an intervention by the Labour Court, whose recommendation was accepted by both parties.

At the time of writing this report over pay, conditions of employment and union recognition was developing in **Dunne's Stores** and MANDATE and SIPTU were in the process of balloting their members for strike action.

Challenges in the Construction Sector

The Construction Industry has been without a legally binding collective agreement since May 2013.

Construction activity is on the increase but in the absence of the protections afforded by a Registered Employment Agreement (REA). There is much anecdotal evidence of a race to the bottom in terms and conditions of employment.

Even on public contracts, employers are brazenly refusing to pay pension contributions, travel time or agreed rates of pay. Workers presenting for employment are offered bogus self –employment, which is being facilitated by Revenue’s flawed procedures. Congress lobbied the Revenue Commissioners to strengthen its procedures but our representations have been rejected and dismissed to date.

The Construction Industry Federation (CIF) has consistently refused to confirm that its members would continue to honour existing agreements. The Construction Industry Committee (CIC) pledged to resist non-compliance with the agreement wherever it is detected. Given the scale of the problems it is surprising that with the exception of the recent long running dispute at JJ Rathigan there have not been a significant number of disputes over non-compliance in the industry. This may reflect workers apathy or a problem with trade union organisation in construction. One way or another, the longer employers can continue to pay what they like and ignore agreements, the harder it will be to restore any order or regulation to the industry.

The New Legislation

Legislation is in preparation which is designed to facilitate a legally enforceable rate for the industry. However at time of writing Congress has not had sight of the text, but we do know the legislation contains no proposals which will give the unions any role in ensuring compliance. Neither will the new legislation make collectively bargained agreements legally binding. It is hoped that the legislation will be enacted by mid-2015, at which time the real challenge will be to convince employers that an industry with an enforceable minimum rate is preferable to bogus self-employment and ongoing deregulation.

The Construction Industry Pension Scheme

The striking down of REAs by the Supreme Court means that employers no longer have to pay pension contributions on behalf of employees. The number of active members dropped from 90,000 at peak to 20,000 at time of writing. Unless something is done to repair the damage by the next round of public procurement the Construction Industry Pension Scheme will not survive. Consequently, the current generation of building workers will be relying solely

on the Contributory Old Age Pension which they will not receive until age 68.

Below is the list of officers and delegates to the CIC

OFFICERS

Chair: Pat Guilfoyle;

Vice Chair: Billy Wall;

Secretary: Jimmy Coughlan

DELEGATES

UNITE: Tom Fitzgerald, Rob Kelly, Keith Troy.

TEEU: Eamon Devoy, Pat Guilfoyle, Brian Nolan, Gerry Fitzpatrick

BATU: Brendan O’Sullivan, Andy Smith, Eddie Morris, Michael McNamara, Greg Macken jnr., Karl Deegan, Andy Connolly

UCATT: Jim Moore, Thomas Faulkner

OPATSI: Billy Wall, Barry Murphy

SIPTU: Jimmy Coughlan, Martin Meere, Owen Reidy, Jim Sheridan, Pat McCabe, Pat McGrath, Davey Lane, Mark Quinn, Mary McElligott

PART II

RISE IN PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

The extent of this problem is highlighted in the last two editions of the OECD's Employment Outlook which defines low paying as jobs that earn less than two thirds of a country's median income.

On average, around 16% of jobs in OECD countries are considered low-paying. Sweden and Finland's rates are in single digits while the incidence of low pay in the UK remained constant in this decade at 20.5%.

Ireland's rate rose from 19.2% in 2002, to 21.8% in 2012. Low pay was two percentage points above the OECD average in 2002, but 5.3% above in 2012, making Ireland the lowest scoring country in the EU on this measure.

This statistic serves to reinforce the need for the reintroduction of sectoral minimum wages, such as were provided by the Joint Labour Committees (JLCs).

It also highlights the role of hours worked in determining earnings, the need for measures to give stability of hours worked and the need for the social welfare system to be neutral in this equation rather than supporting a low earnings regime.

Most studies show that Irish employment protection legislation is among the most lax in the OECD. It should therefore be of little surprise that employment quality in Ireland ranks among the lowest in the OECD. While many orthodox economists make much of Ireland's seemingly high minimum wage (which loses some of its gloss when adjusted for purchasing power) little mention is made of the other variable in earnings- hours worked.

According to the latest data from Eurostat, in 2013, 146,900 part-time workers were under employed. They wished to work a longer week, but this option was not available. Clearly over the last two decades

there has been a large change in the patterns of working hours.

There has been a decline in working hours for the generally low paid workers, while the hours of other occupation groups have been largely stable.

A central part of the discussion on activation is that progressing from unemployment to work automatically provides a way out of poverty. Recent experience has shown that this is not the case.

A significant number of employers are relying on the social protection system to subsidise their wage bills. This is done by giving part time workers contracts with minimum hours, which can be increased or decreased at the whim of the employer.

Congress made a presentation to the Oireachtas Committee on Employment & Social Protection on this issue. This outlined how some employers were playing games with the social insurance system, using it to subsidise their wage bills, and thus undermining the basic premise of insurance which is that risk is priced, and riskier behaviour attracts a higher premium.

The Labour Market Monitor (http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/lmm_vol_1_no_2.pdf) has highlighted the high number of large employers who have a significant number of their employees reliant of jobseekers payments or on Family Income Supplement for part of their income. The European Commission in its 2015 European semester report observed that:

"A worrying trend in the Irish youth labour market is the increase in involuntary part-time work, which stands at 41.4 % of those aged 15-24 in temporary employment (compared with 37.5 % in the EU as a whole). This trend, along with a 20 percentage points increase in part-time employment as a percentage of total employment for those aged 15-24 points to increasing labour market segmentation for young people."

This highlights the need to put in place measures which will address certainty in working hours.

Achieving Equal Opportunities

The Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission (IHREC) finally came into being in November 2014, following the formal merger of Equality Authority with the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission,

arising from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act.

Despite our best efforts there are no trade union (or employer) representatives among the new Commissioners appointed. Congress is now developing a working relationship with the IHREC and has had a series of meetings with staff and Commissioners with a view to agreeing a modus operandi between the organisations.

The new Chief Commissioner, Emily Logan, spoke at our Mental Health and the Workplace Seminar (October 2014) and we presented at the Equality mainstreaming conference of the IHREC and also the Beijing plus 20 conference, in February 2015.

In relation to the Equality Tribunal, we have been working to ensure that the principle enshrined in the EU anti-discrimination Directives of guaranteeing easy access to redress is maintained in the creation of the Workplace Relations Commission.

We have been working to ensure that sufficient consideration has been given to the unique nature of equality cases, the particular role of Equality Officers and the Equality Tribunal, and the need for our infrastructure to address the high levels of under-reporting of discrimination in Ireland.

Among our wide range of other equality-related activities during the period were:

- Continued development of equality training opportunities for unions including liaising with Workers College equality training group on coordination of trade union equality training.
- Training events run by Congress and participation by Congress staff on trade union equality training events, including: SIPTU college groups, the newly elected Equality Committee in IMPACT; CWU; IBOA; MANDATE, POA and others.
- Briefing on Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act organised by Congress with input from the Equality Authority. Congress made submission on the proposed amendment.
- Continued engagement with political institutions regarding the rights of LGBT people at work (Labour Bill revising Section 37.1 of Employment

Equality Act accepted by Government) and submission to Constitutional Convention on same sex marriage.

- Attended and supported INMO in their first LGBT conference in June 2013.
- Congress submission to Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality on Integration, Multi-Culturalism and combatting Racism.
- Launch of Trade Union Polish Network with participation of Minister of State, Aodhan O Riordain: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2014/09/26/launch-of-polish-network>.
- Participation in the ETUC Migration working group meetings. This included a roundtable discussion with Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom on EU-related matters. Discussions also included planning for the first ETUC Conference on trade union services for migrant workers to be held in Brussels in December. We have secured the participation of SIPTU and the NIC-ICTU Migrant Support Service participation in this project. Continued liaison with ETUC regarding our participation and planning for final event (June 2015): <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2015/03/13/unionmigrantnet-registration-portal-opens/>
- Agreed trade union actions for inclusion, following meeting with National Disability Authority (NDA) on engaging employers in relation to launch of the long awaited Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.
- Successfully applied to Equality Authority Innovation Fund to replicate the BelongTo 'Stand Up' campaign in workplaces. Video attracted much publicity including among trade unions internationally and in local and national media.
- Executive Council support for trade unions to support the nomination of the INTO LGBT Teachers group for a Gay and Lesbian Award (GALA) – the first trade union group to be nominated for such an award. They were also successful!
- Spoke at a number of LGBT related events organised by trade unions including the PSEU,

INMO and the INTO - <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2014/12/04/trade-unions-supporting-lgbt-equality/>

- Coordinated trade union support for a Yes vote in the May 2015 referendum on marriage equality including a photo-shoot for Executive Council members on the voting registration drive campaign – Yes Equality, including work with Council members, Seamus Dooley and Ethel Buckley on launch of Trade Unions for Civil Marriage Equality in Liberty Hall 13th February – <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2015/02/13/love-and-pride/> - and subsequent briefings for affiliates to ensure trade union support for a yes vote in the referendum
- Meetings with violence against women groups to plan trade union participation in events with emphasis on role of men in tackling violence against women. Secured Executive Council support for actions, including: Trade union leaders' attendance at White Ribbon Event <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2014/12/04/16-days-campaign/> -
- Collaboration with Safe Ireland in relation to violence against women campaign culminated in the October launch of Man Up: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2014/10/23/congress-partners-with-safe-ireland-on-man-up-camp/> .
- The General Secretary participated in the latter event. The workplace element included the results of a survey carried out among trade union members. Also facilitated participation of the Women's Committee Chair in the Oireachtas Justice Committee hearings (Feb 2014) on violence against women.
- David Joyce continues to represent the ETUC as an alternate member to the Experts Forum of the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE)
- Following on from workshop in EU Foundation Seminar Series on 'Promoting diversity at the workplace: a strategy for inclusion and competitiveness', co-authored Irish report for subsequent seminar held in Vienna in October 2013 and co-presented the Irish report for the seminar with Carole Sullivan of the Equality Authority.

- Spoke on decent work deficits for women in Ireland at National Women's Council event (July 2014)

- For regular equality updates and more about our Equality work, please visit: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/>

Pensions

As far back as 2003 Congress explained that the sustainability of occupational pension schemes was being undermined by a combination of factors including:

- Increased longevity.
- Demographic changes of retired people adversely affecting the dependency ratio.
- Lower yields on equity investments.
- Inadequate provision for strain costs on pension schemes arising from industrial restructuring.

These concerns were voiced to government through the Social Partnership process from 2003 onwards but, despite many commitments, reviews and examinations the political will to grapple with the issue has been lacking in all governments.

The decline in Defined Benefit schemes has been catastrophic. In 2006 there were 1,232 schemes with 269,529 active members. By early 2015 the number of schemes was down by nearly 50% to 703 schemes with only 137,000 active members. Some 90% of the surviving schemes are closed to new members. The government and the Pension Regulator have regulated Defined Benefit schemes almost to extinction and the workers are being forced to carry the losses.

Industrial Disputes

Since BDC 2013, a number of industrial disputes involving the larger occupational schemes have been dealt with or are currently under negotiation. These include:

- **Waterford Glass** Following an ECJ judgement on a case brought by UNITE (supported by SIPTU) Congress was able to assist in the negotiation of a settlement in dialogue with Tánaiste, Ms Joan Burton.



- **ESB** This was resolved through the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) following a threat of industrial action.
- **Aviation Sector** There are four employers in the Irish Aviation Superannuation Scheme (IASS) pension scheme which was in deficit to the tune of €720 million. Following several interventions by the LRC, Labour Court, Irish Business & Employers' Confederation (IBEC), Congress, Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation (DEJI), Department of Transport and an Expert Panel, the Aer Lingus element was resolved towards the end of 2013. The Dublin Airport Authority (DAA)/ Shannon Airport Authority (SAA) component is not resolved at the time of writing.

The State Old Age Pension

At the behest of the Troika the government changed the eligibility criterion for the tier one state pension in two respects:

The age at which a person may receive a pension will be progressively extended from 65 to 66 to 67 and 68 over the next few years.

The number of social welfare contributions required to qualify over a working life have been increased significantly.

These changes are a matter of constant disputation between Congress, the government and the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

Health & Safety Authority

The terms of office of Congress nominated Board members of the HSA terminated at the close of 2013. Eamon Devoy (TEEU), Dessie Robinson (IMPACT) and Esther Lynch (Congress) stood down and were replaced by Chris Rowland (SIPTU), Pat Kenny (CWU) and Frank Vaughan (Congress). Pat Kenny was subsequently elected as Deputy Chair of the board.

Congress nominees on the board have actively participated in a strategic review of the Authority's work, and have made proposals for the strengthening of the role of the safety representative through adoption of the Australian model - which allow for reps to issue 'temporary improvement notices' - while they have also supported a greater emphasis on the health elements of the Authority's remit, and especially in relation to mental health in the workplace.

It was also agreed that the HSA would provide support for the designation of Workers' Memorial Day (see below) as a national commemoration from 2015. Congress is represented on a number of other health and safety committees.

Work Related Vehicle Safety Consultative Panel

The Work Related Vehicle Consultative Panel acts in a consultancy capacity to the Work Related Vehicle Safety Steering Group, which comprises the Health & Safety Authority, An Garda Síochána and the Road Safety Authority. Its purpose is to help bring about a reduction in the level of death, ill health and injury caused by work-related vehicle activity. Pat Kenny (CWU) represents Congress on this panel. The purpose of the panel is to assist the Steering Group to achieve its strategic aims in key areas such as:

- awareness raising
- promotion of good practice
- education and training programmes
- guidance and resource material for employers and employees
- sharing of agreed information, research and resources



Caption

Focal Point Network

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work mission is to make Europe's workplaces safer, healthier and more productive. It does this by bringing together representatives from European workplaces to share knowledge and information in order to promote a culture of risk prevention. Located in Bilbao, Spain, they have a dedicated staff of occupational safety and health (OSH), communication and administrative specialists. At the national level, they are represented through a network of focal points, which are usually the lead OSH bodies in the individual member states. The agency is a tripartite organisation which means that they work with governments, employers and workers representatives. They act as a single reference point for OSH information and commission, collect and publish new scientific research and statistics on OSH risks.

The Health & Safety Authority is the National Focal Point for Ireland. The network is made up of stakeholders covering a wide range of representative bodies. Congress is represented on the Network by Bobby Carty (IMPACT), Michelle Quinn (SIPTU), Desmond O Toole (ASTI) and Pat Kenny (CWU)

Workers Memorial Day

International Workers Memorial Day falls annually on April 28. It is an international day of remembrance and action for workers killed, disabled or injured while working. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) each year, more than two million women and men die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases around the world.

The Health & Safety Committee has campaigned over the past number of years for the formal recognition of April 28 as the official commemoration day in Ireland. As part of that strategy, Congress has launched a number of initiatives aimed at highlighting the day over recent years.

In April 2014 a ceremony in CWU headquarters saw the unveiling of a plaque by General Secretary, David Begg that was dedicated to the memory of those killed, injured or made ill as a result of their work.

The event also saw the participation of Martin O'Halloran, CEO of the Health & Safety Authority; Labour MEP for Dublin, Emer Costello; Eamon Devoy, Chair of the Congress Health & Safety Committee; Terry Delany, Deputy General Secretary

of the CWU and Sylvester Cronin, the workers' member for Ireland on the board of EU-OSHA, the European Agency for Safety & Health at Work.

The theme of the event was 'protecting workers around the world, through strong regulation enforcement and union rights'. Eamon Devoy spoke of the need for "stronger regulation, enforcement and union rights" regarding health and safety in the workplace.

Congress General Secretary David Begg said: "As we gather to mark Workers' Memorial Day 2014, we should remember that the health and safety of working people is not a luxury that can be dispensed with as budgetary constraints dictate... Doing our utmost to prevent death and injury in the workplace must be a given, not an afterthought. And that requires proper resources combined with a rigorous inspection regime and strict enforcement. That is the only fitting tribute we could pay to the memory of those who have lost their lives or been injured at work."

A delegation from the committee met with Ged Nash TD following his appointment as Minister for Business & Employment in mid-2014. His office has responsibility for health & safety and oversees the work of the HSA. The delegation raised concerns about funding for the authority, reiterated the importance of the role of safety representatives, and spoke about the dangers of deregulation that might occur under the guise of the REFIT agenda at EU level. During the course of the meeting, the Minister expressed his strong support for the designation of Workers' Memorial Day as a national day of commemoration. Workers' Memorial Day was duly designated as a national day of commemoration with the first such event scheduled to take place in April 2015.



AD

**SECTION 5
NORTHERN
IRELAND:
BUILDING
THE PEACE**

5

5

NORTHERN IRELAND: BUILDING THE PEACE

This chapter deals with the work of the Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) over the past two years and is centred on the **Investing for Peace** strategy which encompasses all socio-economic issues.

Crucial to the success of **Investing for Peace** is the realisation of all strands of the Good Friday Agreement. This chapter is structured to reflect the main three strands of the Agreement.

Strand 1: Northern Ireland

Strand 2: North/South/ All-island

Strand 3: East/West relations

STRAND ONE: NORTHERN IRELAND

Austerity & Northern Ireland

This report outlines the main activities of the Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) since 2013, a period dominated by a campaign of resistance to the austerity programme imposed by the Stormont administration and the UK's coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

The NIC has been well served by the committed and efficient leadership of Pamela Dooley, whose two year term as NIC Chair ended in 2014. Her successor, Jackie Pollock, now steers the work of the Committee, and acts as its public face, engaging with the media and stating the NIC position during lobbies, protests and rallies.

There has been plenty to protest about and lobby against over the past two years, and especially the past six months

Two days before Christmas 2014, a long-simmering crisis among the governing parties in Stormont was 'resolved' with the signing of the Stormont House Agreement (SHA). This deal ended a crisis in the relationship between the two largest parties in the mandatory coalition of the NI Executive, Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party.

The agreement was hailed as a great achievement by the main political parties, the administrations in Dublin, London and Washington, all of the local press and the cabal of business organisations. But not by the trade unions.

The unions have major problems with the Stormont House Agreement. We are concerned that there has not been enough public scrutiny of the details, or more disturbingly, the lack of details.

There is very little (if any) progress of the human rights and equality issues we have repeatedly raised with all of the political parties, especially the Bill of Rights.

We are also worried by the financial sleight-of hand at work.

Despite loud claims, the SHA does not include £2 billion in new money. In fact, the Tories are making the NI Executive take a 'pay-day loan' of £700,000,000 to be used for redundancy payments only – not for investment in housing, public health or infrastructure.

At least 20,000 jobs will disappear for ever. We do not believe that any job is the sole property of whoever is carrying out that task. Each job lost is gone forever. That means one less job for a school leaver and one less service for the community.

Those thousands of 'redundant' public servants will face the UK's lowest private sector wages, or experience the everyday humiliations built in to the cruel Tory vision of 'reformed' welfare.

At the core of this 'rebalancing of the economy' is a huge cut in Corporation Tax. There is no guarantee that a single job will be created because of this handout to businessmen.

However, there is an absolute certainty that thousands of jobs and millions of pounds will be taken from the public, never to return. Then, there is the 'crucial domino effect' in the private sector,

following the loss of the 20,000 jobs, leading to a very significant loss of demand in the local economy.

That in turn will lead to further job losses.

This is a bad deal, fit only for a land of pound shops and food banks, rather than the society most of us voted for at the last election. The Tories could not win a single Northern Ireland seat in the 18 they contested in 2010. But they have triumphed with the Stormont House Agreement (SHA).

(A NERI analysis of the SHA – which proved vital to the Congress campaign against the deal – can be found at the conclusion of this section.)

After decades of supporting every initiative for peace and stability, the entire trade union movement expressed its opposition to the Stormont House Agreement. Our rejection caused outrage among many of our 'traditional' political allies and scorn from our 'traditional' opponents.

The private sector press, which stood to profit from the deal's promise to slash Corporation Tax, distorted our message when they could no longer ignore it.

In the NI Assembly, the First Minister Peter Robinson was fed a soft question by Sammy Wilson MLA and vented his displeasure at a series of newspaper adverts sponsored by Congress:

"I am sure that many of the party leaders in the House will have received representation in the run-up to and during the Stormont House Agreement from church and civic leaders, including representatives of the trade unions, telling us that it was our responsibility to be prepared to compromise and to make accommodation for others. I have to say that I agree with the principles behind the Make it Work campaign, but it is sad to see that, although it went to such lengths in launching its campaign, as soon as the parties reach agreement in talks, one of its member organisations comes out with the most outrageous statements about the agreement. That is not leadership, which was what the campaign was saying people needed to show in order to reach agreement in Northern Ireland. The advertisement shows a very poor knowledge of economic principles and facts."

As Congress Assistant General Secretary Peter Bunting reminded the Belfast Newsletter when it repeated the same canard:

“It is true that I, alongside other prominent figures from civic society, called for the parties to reach agreement. You seem to forget that the ‘stumbling blocks’ last October were primarily Flags and Emblems, Dealing with the Past and Parades. Unless you are reading a completely different version of the Stormont House Agreement to the one in general circulation, you will note that no agreement has been reached on any of those matters.

“What was agreed, with real targets based on solid deadlines and fiscal implications, was a series of economic measures, all of which we have been opposed to for years; the Imposition of the Tory vision of Welfare ‘Reform’; the devolution of the power to cut the rate of Corporation Tax and consequently remove at least £400 million per annum from the block grant; the removal of at least 20,000 jobs from the public sector.”

Let us be clear. All of the issues which have retarded progress in recent years, which foiled the best efforts of Richard Haass and all others who dared try, are still unresolved.

Take away the quadruple whammy of neoliberal nostrums (welfare reform, tax cuts for the wealthy ‘balanced’ by job cuts for the middling, and the ‘sale of public assets’), the Stormont House Agreement contains no agreement whatsoever on anything substantial:

Flags, Identity, Culture & Tradition New quango from June 2015 “for further addressing” with built-in vetoes for SF and the DUP.

Parades Possible devolution to Assembly; possible return to Code of Practice; no parades panel for North Belfast; possible legislation, possibly not.

The Past An archive (based on existing archives); a narrative by selected academics; continued but vague support for Victims & Survivors Service; possible pension for injured.

Historical Investigations Unit New quango, continuing HET quango work.

Independent Commission on Information Retrieval New quango, continuing ICIR; 5 year time-span.

An Implementation and Reconciliation Group Incredibly vague, but seemingly to oversee some of above.

Institutional Reform Five seat constituencies from 2021; Petitions of Concern unchanged; possible structure for an opposition; Abolition of three Depts; tiny changes to NI Executive meetings; cutting of public consultations from 12 week minimum to 8.

Outstanding Commitments These include something for ‘civic voices’ that is not the Civic Forum; No Acht na Gaeilge; No Bill of Rights; No changes to NSMC; Full Implementation of TBUC.

Northern Ireland Not the Same

It could have been different. We argued in a lengthy paper circulated to the political parties that there was a case to be made to the three ‘guarantors’, London, Dublin and Washington DC.

We reiterated the arguments we originally made to Richard Haass in December 2013, during his unsuccessful attempt to broker an agreement on flags, parades and the past. We argued that Northern Ireland is different. The parties used our rhetoric and arguments in closed sessions and public statements. Then they signed the SHA.

We argued that Northern Ireland has similar social problems and economic realities to other ‘post-industrial’ parts of the United Kingdom. It has the same persistent poverty and deprivation statistics as south Wales, or the northeast of England, or certain boroughs of London.

However, Northern Ireland has something else. We can be discreet about it and refer to it as ‘the elephant in the room’, or more explicit and call it the ‘cancer of sectarianism’. Whatever you call it, it has a cost.

Let’s call it the ‘Troubles Premium’. It means additional spending that is simply not avoidable. It is non-discretionary spending like depreciation of assets or interest on loans or payments to bondholders.

We have identified six areas of state spending which are affected by this 'Troubles Premium'. They will cost more money than other parts of the UK, there is no alternative to state spending (i.e. there is no market solution) and they cannot be ignored, as the potential for any disruption is not predictable, as the flags protests demonstrated.

A fragile peace process can only withstand a certain amount of pressure. We are deeply concerned that the progress made over the past two decades will be severely set back by the external pressures of austerity upon the internal pressures of Northern Ireland's well-known unresolved issues.

The six areas affected by the 'Troubles Premium' are:

Poverty Persistent and intergenerational. Linked to victims and perpetrators of violence;

Investment Afflicted by 'Troubles' narrative – a perception reinforced by reality;

Security More police, expensive prisons, peace walls, empowered 'defenders'

Sectarianism Duplication of services, barriers to 'others' empowered 'enforcers'

Education Segregation at age 4 by faith & by class at 11; 'brain drain' of graduates & de-skilled older population. The elite in denial over 'world-class' status. 80% of Protestant boys on Free School Meals are leaving without usable qualifications.

Mental Health Affects 10% of the population, with enormous concentrations in areas close to 'peace lines.'

Our more detailed paper on this issue (available on www.ictuni.org) outlined the precarious nature of life for the marginalised and working poor in Northern Ireland, thereby reinforcing the premise that Northern Ireland is a society still in a conflict mode with huge swathes of the population not in receipt of a 'peace dividend' but teetering on the brink of further regression, in social and economic terms.

If the political parties and governments are sincere in resolving the inter-communal difficulties, then it is an imperative to allow time for such agreement to take root and flourish in an environment where parties are not in conflict over allocation of

sufficient funding for Health, Education, Training and Upskilling and other efficient public services and investments.

To this end we maintain that it is a financial stimulus Northern Ireland requires - NOT destabilising austerity economics with constant job losses adding to the difficulties outlined above.

The trade union movement takes very seriously the defence of the Good Friday Agreement, whose provisions it campaigned for over the decades and whose full implementation has been a larger priority than it would have been if other guarantors had pulled their weight and kept their promises

Two years ago, the NI Committee marked the 15th anniversary of the Agreement and Peter Bunting reflected on its significance:

"This anniversary should remind us what has been achieved since 1998, but should act as a catalyst for completing it.

"We should never forget that there are hundreds of people alive today who would have been killed or injured or imprisoned or exiled had the Agreement never been reached. That fact alone makes the effort and frustrations felt by all sides over the years worth the effort it took to maintain the progress we have all made since 1998.

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance, and likewise the price of ensuring that we are progressing and not regressing is vigilance by an active citizenry through an inclusive civil society.

"Because we are regressing in certain points - most especially human rights and political participation.

"We have seen the abolition of the Civic Forum, which had many flaws but could have acted as a social conscience for the Assembly and Executive. We have the clear commitment to a comprehensive Bill of Rights side-lined. The promised Single Equality Act never materialised.

"We have in the Assembly no clear opposition, beyond a couple of principled MLAs. The Big



Caption

Four parties have now become the Big Five, and perhaps they need to be reminded that participation in the NI Executive is mandatory and not compulsory. The distinction is fine, but deep.

“There is also the fact of declining participation in elections, especially by the younger voters, a creeping non-vote of no-confidence in our emergent political class. Add to this, the current scandal of rising youth unemployment being at its highest since 1998 and the visibility of alienated young people in recent protests and disturbances, adds to the sense that we are letting down the supposed beneficiaries of the Agreement.

“The Agreement is not perfect for everybody, but it is still the best future for us all, together. Complete it.”

Congress Response to Stormont House Agreement

In response to the economic and fiscal challenges of the Stormont House Agreement, public sector unions balloted their members for industrial action, including unified strike action, while Congress, the trades councils and affiliated unions embarked on a ‘Tour of the North’.

This involved over 100 public and branch meetings where we outlined our concerns and undertook a concerted campaign to convey our message to the widest audience, via conventional media channels and social media.

A feature of the campaign strategy was correcting in public the many incidences of misreporting of the content of the SHA and the reasons why unions opposed to its enabling budgetary policies.

It was important that our analysis of the SHA be taken to all opinion shapers.

For the first time ever, a delegation from the NIC went to Westminster to lobby MPs and Peers, especially the NI Select Committee, and a successful meeting was hosted by Dave Anderson MP and Stephen Hepburn MP (Labour).

Several MPs and peers were briefed by the trade union delegation, as was the Shadow Secretary of State, Ivan Lewis MP in a separate meeting. In sharp contrast, the Tory Secretary of State Theresa Villiers, has met just one trade union delegation in her three years in office.

The result of taking our campaign to the public, the politicians, a reluctant press and most especially the membership, was a series of votes for strike action in the unions with most members threatened by

redundancies, or working on in a reduced and over-pressurised environment.

Up to 70,000 workers in six unions went on strike on Friday March 13, the largest such co-ordinated action since November 2011, which was the largest strike since the foundation of the state of Northern Ireland.

Rallies and marches were held in Omagh, Enniskillen, Strabane, Newry, Craigavon, Coleraine, L'Derry and Belfast, where thousands filled Royal Avenue as they marched to the City Hall. Asked afterwards if the Day of Action 'was worth it', Peter Bunting replied:

"Yesterday, tens of thousands of hard-working public servants did something extraordinary. They voluntarily sacrificed a day's pay to send a simple message to three groups of powerful people: the Tory-led administration in Westminster; the Stormont Executive parties; and the unelected power elites at the top of business and the quango state.

"Bus workers, legal secretaries, hospital porters, dinner ladies, teachers and students were among the thousands who sent a clear message that they will not be the sacrificial lambs for an unworkable Tory dream.

"The budget and the economic clauses of the Stormont House Agreement were hailed as the saving of Northern Ireland by Cameron and Villiers, most local politicians and the spokespeople for big business who dominate discourse on the economy.

"Yesterday we heard and we saw the people who work hardest to keep this society civilised have their say. Quite sensibly, they do not buy the myth that Welfare Reform, privatising public assets, eliminating 20,000 good jobs and a massive cut in Corporation Tax will make NI a better place.

"What we saw yesterday, in short, was an expression of democracy that went beyond Orange and Green.

"And we haven't finished yet."

Building Peace - & Justice

The SHA disappointed on more than economic issues. Rights were trumped in an atmosphere of demonized welfare claimants and conscience clauses.

The clear commitment in the Good Friday Agreement to a comprehensive Bill of Rights has been sidelined. The promised Single Equality Act has never materialised. There is no agreement on any meaningful strategy to define, let alone address, sectarianism. Nor do we have adequate or effective strategies on sexual orientation, gender, disability, race, older people, young people, and the long promised anti-poverty strategy.

THE NIC still believes that a comprehensive strategy to address sectarianism should be a priority for the devolved administration and that the social benefits of a rights based society would match the economic impact of a Northern Ireland free of division.

The spectre of violence and the threat of sectarian conflict still manifest themselves.

The 'Flags protests' have continued for three years now. In February 2014, a history teacher faced threats from sinister online cowards over her political views which quickly escalated into orchestrated protests and physical intimidation. Congress had to state the obvious, as some political parties lined up with the internet trolls and real physical bullies:

"Workers have a right to go to work without fear and also have the right to hold personal political views and join political parties, if they so wish. Legislation and the Belfast Agreement are both clear on the right to hold political opinions. The history curriculum and its teaching are also clear, and it is defamatory to accuse Ms Seeley of indoctrinating her classes, just as it is insulting to the intelligence of her students.

"However, history students ought to know that for much of the 'Troubles' and for too many periods over the past century-and-a-half, the perception that you were the 'wrong sort' was often enough to get you expelled from your work, or even murdered.

“Political leaders need to speak out strongly now and condemn the treatment of Ms Seeley. We have also seen in the recent past ‘tit-for-tat’ expulsions and a cycle of retaliation that escalates, ruining careers and lives. Working people are under enough pressure already without the additional stress of fearing their colleagues, or the people for whom they provide services.

“Our political leaders have a duty to their own supporters - if they will not defend the political rights of others, then how can they protect the rights of their own supporters?

“Politics works best when it takes place in public. People should not be ashamed to join political parties and make it public. This is a free speech issue at its most basic, and is the norm in modern democracies.”

A month later, two letter bombs were found in Royal Mail sorting offices in Derry and Lisburn. Congress denounced this “deeply disturbing development”:

“The reckless nature of this cowardly move by shadowy groups must also be highlighted. The people placed at risk by letter bombs are ordinary workers - those working for Royal Mail and those working for the Prison Service who could have been seriously injured or worse by these sinister packages. Letter bombs do not discriminate, but the people who sent the packages do discriminate. They must cease immediately this pointless and harmful campaign.”

In May, dissident republicans threw a firebomb into a hotel in a predominantly unionist part of L'Derry, an attack designed to raise sectarian tensions at a time when racist, as well as 'faith-based', attacks were increasing. This followed a spate of 'proxy bombings', a tactic involving threats to workers and making them unwilling couriers of their unstable explosive devices and a disturbing echo of the most callous years of the conflict. The vacuum was being filled.

Racist attacks escalated, in a political context marked by the absence of the promised Racial Equality Strategy and the lack of coherent political leadership from the Northern Ireland Executive. Public debate was further coarsened by regrettable remarks about another faith by the supreme leader of

one of the largest congregations – a church regularly attended by the First Minister, who added some choice remarks of his own.

In response, a major march and rally was jointly hosted by Congress, Amnesty International and the NI Centre for Ethnic Minorities. The march was attended by thousands of people revolted by the ramped-up racial and sectarian tensions of the summer of 2014, and it is noticeable how that rhetoric has declined and when expressed, is robustly challenged.

The profile of ethnic minorities as 'targets' has declined in response to the 'Gay Cake' furore over the legal case of Ashers Bakery Versus Gareth Lee and the Equality Commission. The controversy increased when Paul Givan, a DUP MLA, brought a private members bill allowing a 'conscience clause' for business owners with 'strong religious convictions' to refuse trade from those considered an 'abomination' by a certain reading of that faith.

Although the 'conscience clause' has no chance of passing into law (a blocking Petition of Concern is pledged by Sinn Féin, SDLP, Alliance and Greens), the Bill attracted the support of some faith groups. Most notably the Catholic church.

In response, Congress noted the contrast with its sister congregation in England and Wales who issued advice to Catholic voters on the same day as the Bishop of Down & Connor met with Mr Givan and Peter Robinson.

The English and Welsh bishops argued that business “should see itself at the service of society”, asking: “Do your candidates support a living wage and a thriving private sector committed to fair pay and the dignity of human work?”

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, did not mince his words: “It is shocking that in a society as rich as ours there are people, even people in employment, who are dependent on food banks and handouts.”

Back in Stormont, a few metres from where the Catholic hierarchy agreed their concordat with the DUP, the NI Assembly was pushing through the final stages of the Welfare Reform Bill. This Bill is a central plank of the Tory programme of austerity which will upend the social fabric of our society.

Congress argued that this ought to have been more suitable for the concerned attention of the Catholic Church.

During our campaign of opposition to austerity, including the Welfare Reform Bill, the trade unions sought meetings with the hierarchies of the main Christian denominations. Apart from one meeting in 2013 there has been no sustained anti-austerity campaign which could in any way be compared to the high-profile stance of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, which branded Welfare Reform as a “disgrace.”

Building a Future for the Young?

The complete paralysis of the political system after the failure of the Haass talks prompted the trade union movement to make a public call for action in January 2014, which received support from some community organisations, but found it difficult to engage the business lobby or the churches.

The message was that we, the people, demand that action be taken to end political stalemate; to end all violence and to end inter-communal strife. We called on the political parties to build a new political momentum in which our politicians work together in the best interests of all the people, addressing a series of vital issues which are crucial for the social and economic wellbeing of Northern Ireland.

We cannot simply sit around while the parties in power prevaricate on vital projects, from much-needed infrastructural investment which supports private sector jobs, to a Bill of Rights for all, a vital part of any social infrastructure which empowers citizens.

A quarter of our young people are unemployed. Just as disturbingly, thousands more of our brightest young people are leaving. This is the financial cost we cannot count and cannot bear. Like the inward investment lost by political instability, we are losing what we never had, but desperately need.

The depths of the economic crisis went unacknowledged and denied by a political class obsessed with flags, symbols, cultural ‘wars’ and carefully edited versions of history.

Research from the Centre for Cities highlighted what the trade unions had been saying for months.

The recession was still in force in Northern Ireland and the ‘recovery’ being touted by the Westminster coalition government was largely a revival of the fortunes of London and the South-East of England.

Northern Ireland still has the lowest rate of business start-ups in the 64 cities surveyed, with one of the lowest rates of patents granted. The private sector is still too weak to lead any jobs recovery for our young unemployed. For school leavers and graduates, the best chance they have to find a rewarding job is to move, thus worsening the ‘brain drain’ and leaving Northern Ireland behind, in so many ways.

The Centre for Cities research reveals that Belfast has the third highest rate of working age people with no qualifications. Current trends suggest that this may not improve with few options of quality jobs for our educated young workers. We will continue to be a low-skill and low-wage backwater with few incentives to stay or invest.

The education system is not fit for purpose. It has taken years to establish the Education & Skills Authority while our children are prepared for life by being segregated by faith at age four and by class at age eleven.

Only half of children on Free School Meals achieve 5 GCSEs Grade A*-C and less than 30% of those children of the working poor and the jobless achieve 2 A-Levels. An even smaller proportion of children entitled to Free School Meals – 18% - go onto third-level education.

Welfare Reform will ensure that the poor remain excluded through cuts to tax credits, disability benefits and Employment Support Allowance - benefits intended to support the working poor.

Areas of multiple deprivation suffered the most during the conflict. Now they are taking the brunt of austerity, the most marginalised communities in a region which is peripheral to the ‘recovery’ centred on London. One-in-four of our young people are unemployed, many for over a year. A lost generation is being created in front of our eyes and we have no clear strategy to address the issue, unless you count an unconditional tax cut for large companies, as envisioned by the Stormont House Agreement.

War on the Poor

Divisions between the DUP and SF on welfare were exploited by Tory ministers, such as Mike Penning, as both parties were extremely nervous about alienating core parts of their vote, and delayed for two years the return of the Welfare Reform Bill to the Assembly.

Central to Penning's argument is 'fairness', or as he told Agenda NI: "All we're saying with the welfare reform is, like you and I, it is better to go to work."

This is a familiar trope, and has been waved around by Tory spokesmen like Penning as well as those with the bad luck to be born to a wallpaper millionaire, such as Gideon Osborne.

In his 2012 speech to the Conservative Party conference, Osborne forged the image which encapsulates the entire debate, in all its vindictiveness and duplicity: "We think it's unfair that when that person leaves their home early in the morning, they pull the door behind them, they're going off to do their job, they're looking at their next-door neighbour, the blinds are down, and that family is living a life on benefits."

The duplicity of this comes from the fact that benefits for the working poor are under attack. The vindictiveness of this line comes from the assumption that most people do not know this.

Trevor Ringland, the rugby star-turned-Tory candidate rowed in with the welfare reformers, attacking NIPSA for their 'Grim Reality' billboards. "NIPSA is guilty of frightening people about welfare changes which are fair and necessary", he claimed.

"The reforms are about targeting benefits at the people who need them most and ensuring that, for those who can work, taking a job is the most lucrative option."

According to the NICVA research, cuts in Tax Credits will affect 165,000 NI households. 54,000 homes will suffer from changes to Housing Benefit, with 33,000 fined by the 'Bedroom Tax'.

Many if not most of those households contain at least one working adult. There are 5,000 vacancies for the 60,000 unemployed and hardly any one-

bedroom social homes for refugees from the Bedroom Tax to live in.

Not that such facts ever got in the way of the Tory press in pursuit of the poor.

A YouGov survey of the public's perception on welfare found a startling level of ignorance, such as the belief that 41% of the total welfare budget goes to the unemployed (Reality: 3%) and that fraud accounts for 27% of the same budget (Reality: 0.7%). Where did this come from? One answer is in the result of a Lexis Nexis search for the number of times the word "scrounger" has been used in the UK's national newspapers, which showed a huge spike since 2010.

The Tory press has fed its readers a diet of horror stories of ungrateful and undeserving claimants and the huge televisions they watch have been spewing a diet of frauds and freaks, creating an entire new genre – poverty porn. Hatred of the poor is now legitimised, on morning and evening TV, on radio phone-ins, on social media and on the streets, where people with obvious disabilities have been verbally and physically attacked.

This distorted narrative spilled over into the brewing poison that could be called the 'relationship' between SF and the DUP. There was a deliberate attempt to confuse the electorate between deliberate cuts in government spending. For example, the £78 million cut in the 2013 block grant to Stormont had nothing to do with Welfare Reform; it was merely the latest instalment of the same Tory cuts we have had to endure for previous last four years.

A conscious effort is being made to conflate those cuts with the £87 million fine threatened by HM Treasury if the NI Assembly did not impose welfare reform. There was a further effort to paint this as a choice between reforms or a fine. Let's be clear; both options would have sucked money out of an economy that is barely in recovery.

The reforms as they exist in Britain have been an unmitigated disaster, and wasteful of tax payer resources according to the National Audit Office. They will inflict a multitude of pain, with no gain for the exchequer. What an appalling legacy, in contrast to the brave generations who built a land



Caption

fit for heroes in the aftermath of those wars we now commemorate.

For those in work, there were more jobs, but at lower rates of pay. Zero-hour contracts became the 'new norm' although these exploitative terms have been substantially challenged by the trade unions who continue to lobby the Minister of Employment & Learning, as employment law is a devolved matter and zero-hour contracts can be completely outlawed in NI, which is the aim of Congress.

The trade union movement hosted a series of events ahead of major rallies across the UK, calling for 'A Pay Rise for All'. A march and rally in October 2014 in Belfast was well attended and helped force the issue of low pay onto the agenda.

Congress still believes that, as a respected independent and neutral body in the eyes of competing marginalised groups, it has a duty to respond to requests to act as a good-faith facilitator on a range of issues which still bedevil Northern Ireland.

The benefits of 'stability' have not trickled down. While there has been a peace dividend for some, the patterns of disadvantage have remained unchallenged and on issues like health inequality and educational access, the problems are growing.

There are policy choices which can extend inclusiveness and make the weak feel powerful without blocking roads or besieging their neighbours. Stormont ministers have constantly used the line that the money is not there for investment because HM Treasury control the cash supply.

They can, however, do something which will cost very little in monetary terms, but could bring huge social dividends.

A Bill of Rights for All

A comprehensive Bill of Rights - in tandem with a campaign to encourage people to take part in the decisions which affect their everyday lives - would deepen the roots of democracy and dialogue.

Provision for a Bill of Rights was included in the Good Friday Agreement in recognition that as a society we would benefit from setting down a shared set of rights. As we continue to be a society in transition, developing a Bill of Rights is still as relevant today as it was then.

Creating a new legal framework and rebuilding confidence in the legal system has proven to be an essential element of transition in societies all around the world.

Various international examples from countries emerging from conflicts – like South Africa and Central America – indicate that the process of creating a rights-based instrument represents an important ‘fresh start.’

Countries in transition have almost universally created new constitutions or rights instruments and Northern Ireland can learn much from these experiences.

Not enough people feel that they are being listened to and they can’t afford lobbyists or sufficiently excite the local press. Congress is fighting to ensure that these voices are heard. Politics should not be the exclusive preserve of specialists, of what Peter Robinson revealingly called “the political class.”

PART II

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & ORGANISATION

As the largest civil society organisation in Northern Ireland, Congress has engaged with elected representatives at all levels, from local councils to the NI Assembly, the Executive, the Oireachtas and Westminster, in the many forums set up to address the economic and social crisis caused by austerity and political inertia.

Our capacity was also augmented by the full-time presence of an economist (Paul McFlynn) from the **Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI)**, who has made significant contributions to the policy debate around the economy (see below).

NERI adds to the intellectual strengths already present in the movement – especially the considerable expertise within affiliate unions about their sectors.

We have a talent pool of considerable depth who grasp the technical details and political context

of healthcare, education, equality, human rights, pensions, migration, manufacturing, agri-food, retail, Europe, social security, local government, justice, culture, and all of the cradle-to-grave issues which affect each citizen.

This knowledge is on top of the wisdom we have learnt as trade union representatives and as negotiators.

A special seminar on procurement as a tool for talking social disadvantage saw the Finance Ministers of Wales and Northern Ireland speak at a NERI event, assisted by the network of trade union confederations, the TU Council of the Isles (see report below) .

Engagement with the political class deepened with the formation of the NI Assembly All Party Trade Union Group, established in December 2013, and chaired by Sammy Douglas MLA.

The Group’s mission statement is: “To discuss all socio-economic issues from both a trade union and political perspective in a collaborative environment resulting where possible in the enhancement of the quality of life for Northern Ireland citizens and contribute to economic growth and well-being.”

The group meets regularly with delegations from the NIC and has discussed zero-hour contracts, the employment law review and welfare reform, among other topics.

Our expertise on employment law has been recognised by at least one government department, the Department of Employment & Learning, which refused to import wholesale the Westminster government’s plans for Employment Law, and instead convened a new **Labour Relations Agency Roundtable** for Northern Ireland, with equal representation for trade unions and employers (see below).

This has the aim of utilising the legal fact of devolution to create the most appropriate framework for industrial relations in workplaces across NI.

The **NIC Biennial Conference** was held in April 2014, in Derry. Most of the motions from affiliates and trades councils related to the economy, and the impact of the endless recession on all parts of society, those in work and those without. Welfare

'reform' was a major issue for conference. An emergency motion was passed reiterating our opposition to all cuts which undermine public service provision, cuts to the social security safety net, cuts to employment, and urging the NI Executive to face down threats of such cuts if welfare 'reform' was not imposed.

Likewise, there was a special focus on the 'rollback' of equality and human rights commitments. Many speakers outlined their commitment to pursue that which was promised in 1998. For many at the conference, the highlight was not the powerful speeches from David Begg or Frances O'Grady, but the tributes paid to the NIC's retiring chair, Pamela Dooley, as she finished her decades of service to this movement. The entire trade union movement in Northern Ireland expressed its gratitude, just as, only some months later, it came together to mourn the passing of NASUWT Regional Organiser Karen Sims, who passed away at a tragically young age.

Karen had just been elected to the NIC at the 2014 NI BDC when she received her diagnosis. The movement's respects were expressed at Karen's well-attended funeral by the incoming NIC Chair Jackie Pollock (Unite).

Industrial Relations

The NIC has responded to a range of consultations issued by the Department for Employment and Learning. Regular meetings have been held with the Minister and his officials, including the Permanent Secretary. Employment law is a devolved responsibility for Stormont and there has been considerable pressure from business lobbyists for the extension of plans to 'reform' the law by the Tory-led Westminster government.

The Prime Minister David Cameron commissioned a major donor to his party, Lord Adrian Beecroft, to examine employment law and he dutifully listed his suggestions for change – most of it regressive.

As the laws in the UK are being changed for the worse, the NIC decided that protecting the status of working people in Northern Ireland was a priority. A hopeful sign was the establishment of a Labour Relations Agency Roundtable, where an equal number of employer and employee representatives would take a comprehensive view of employment law.

Legislation discussed and consulted upon by Congress has included Zero Hour Contract, proposals to reform the Posted Workers Directive, the Working Families Bill, TUPE reform, the Employment Law Review and the impact of the Tribunal decision on holiday pay reflecting non-guaranteed overtime hours.

Legislation discussed and consulted upon by Congress has also included issues covering holiday entitlements, blacklisting of trade unionists, an LRA Code of Practice on time off for trade union duties, agency workers, TUPE, trade union political funds, membership criteria, the dispute resolution system and appointments to the LRA Board.

The NIC supported and assisted affiliates in a range of industrial disputes and redundancy situations. These included:

- NJC Pay strike
- Retail Sector
- Teletech
- Stream Allsource
- Mivan
- DVA
- NI Water
- Dunnes Stores
- Ageas Retail
- Allsource
- Swissport
- JTI Gallaghers
- Caterpillar
- Bombardier
- BBC
- Belfast Shipyard
- Public Sector Pension Reform

The NIC and Trades Councils also organised supportive rallies for workers in struggle across the EU, participating in public events to highlight ETUC Days of Action.

Trade Councils Consultative Committee

The Trades Councils have assisted the Northern Ireland Committee by campaigning on a range of issues. These issues have covered:

- The impact of austerity policies
- Campaigns against cuts in services, particularly health, e.g. in defence of services at the Daisy Hill and Causeway hospitals.
- Supporting unions in dispute, e.g. the workers in Greyhound and NI Water.
- Welfare Reform
- International solidarity, e.g. opposition to the Israeli war on Gaza.

The Trades Councils were particularly active in organising local protests and public meetings in support of the public sector strikes in March 2015, working with local trade union branches and community organisations, as well as public representatives. Since then, they have played an essential role in mobilising mass public opposition to the cuts.

Currently there are 11 trades councils covering Belfast, Craigavon, Derry, Fermanagh, Newry, North Down and Ards, Mid Ulster, Omagh, Strabane, Ballymena and Antrim, and Causeway.

The councils come together at the Trades Councils Consultative Committee (TCCC) to share information and initiatives, and to develop and coordinate joint campaigns.

There is also an All Island Trades Councils Consultative Committee which provides a discussion and planning forum for representatives from all trades council on the island.

Over the last two years the councils have been particularly active in organising local protests in response to the impact of public service cuts, working with local trade union branches

and community organisations, as well as public representatives.

They have been instrumental in alerting local communities to the scale and social and economic consequences of the cuts and raising awareness that there is an alternative to the government's neoliberal agenda, with the aim of mobilising mass public opposition.

A number of trades councils have held public meetings on themes including:

Women and Austerity

Socialism in 21st Century – The Latin American Experience

Lurgan & the 1913 Dublin Lockout

Women and the Great War

To maintain and develop this work the TCCC appeals to unions to ensure that they affiliate to, and encourage their members and activists to engage with trades councils in their local areas.

TradeMark

TradeMark has an express responsibility for dealing with sectarianism and the new challenges of racism and fascism. Whilst delivering political education and conducting research and policy development, the unit maintains its roots in intervention and political action.

Since 2011, a grant from the EU Peace III Programme has allowed Trademark to expand its important work, with a focus on 'labour after conflict'.

TradeMark's expertise in conflict resolution and community relations was of crucial assistance to Congress during our response to the NI Executive's paper on Cohesion, Sharing & Integration. TradeMark has also utilised their network of academics and researchers to establish the Centre for Progressive Economics (CPE), a new space for thinkers who oppose the neoliberal consensus to conduct and share research, publish papers and organise seminars.

The 2013 conference represented the culmination of the Trade Unions in Post Conflict Societies programme, funded by the SEUPB. The project explored, analysed and shared learning from regions dealing with conflict with a focus on the role of trade unions in the development of shared and just societies.

Our 2013 and 2014 conferences brought together trade unionists, activists and academics from Britain, Ireland, Iraq, Palestine, the Basque Country (Euskadi) and Andalusia. They spoke about the challenges faced by trade unions in societies in transition, and the challenges from globalisation, such as TTIP.

For more information:

<http://www.trademarkbelfast.com>

<http://www.centreforprogressiveeconomics.com>

Trade Union Education Programme

The programme for all trade union officials, representatives and members continues to develop and this period has seen a large number of new courses reflecting demand from affiliates and changes in society. The programme contains pathways for union representatives, health and safety representatives, equality representatives and union learning representatives.

It offers progression routes for all reps with accredited programmes resulting in awards, certificates and diplomas. A 36 week Equality Diploma was added to the programme to complement the other Diploma courses in Employment Law and Occupational Health & Safety.

In addition to the core TU studies courses the programme offers:

- Negotiation Skills for Reps
- Communication Skills for Reps
- Handling Grievances and Disciplines
- Social media for Reps
- Dealing with Workplace Stress, Bullying and Intimidating behaviour

- Equalities for Union Reps
- Disability Champions for Trade Union Reps
- Pay and Bargaining
- Effective Project Management for Trade Union Reps
- Good Relations and Equality – Tackling Prejudice in the Workplace
- Trade Unions and the Economy - Introduction to Economics for Reps
- Trade Unions, Devolved Governance and the Economy
- Develop a strategy for trade union engagement in devolved governance
- Women and Leadership Training
- Trade Unions, Globalisation, Economic Development and Equality
- Governance in the Public, Voluntary and Community Sector
- Discrimination and Equality Law

In this period numbers of learners have continued to increase and new delivery methods are being introduced to attract additional learners. Evening classes have been successfully added to the programme and work has begun to provide online learning courses.

The programme is currently delivered in partnership with the North West Regional College which employs a network of accredited and experienced part time trade union tutors.

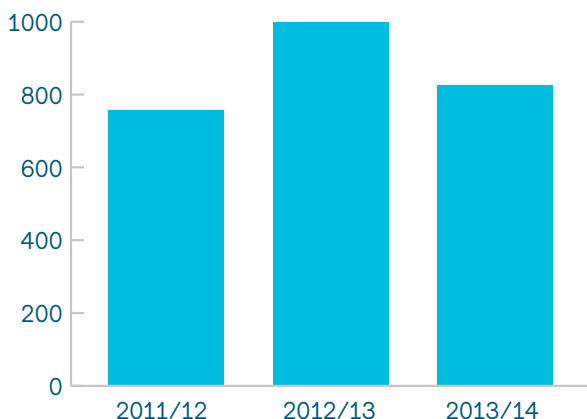
UNION LEARNING

The Union learning programme continues to grow. From its launch in 2002 with five Union Learning funded projects, the Department for Employment and Learning confirmed in April 2014 that a further three year period of funding would be made available. Applications were sought and the following projects - under the Union Learn umbrella - were successful:

- NIPSA
- BFAWU
- UCATT
- USDAW
- BFAWU
- AEGIS
- CWU
- RCN
- GMB
- UNITE
- UNISON

In the last round of funding, which ran from 2011 – 2014, some 2580 students completed Essential Skills classes for Information Technology (IT),

Essential Skills Learners 2011-2014



Literacy and Numeracy. A further 3251 completed non-Essential skills classes such as British Sign Language, Advice & Guidance and Start Up IT.

The Northern Ireland Committee of Congress continues to have full responsibility for the administrative and financial management of the Union Learning Fund. An Independent Assessment Panel was set up ensure the appropriate monitoring and assessment system and that the fund is fully utilised.

Open University

The partnership with the Open University continues and a working group has been established between the OU and Congress.

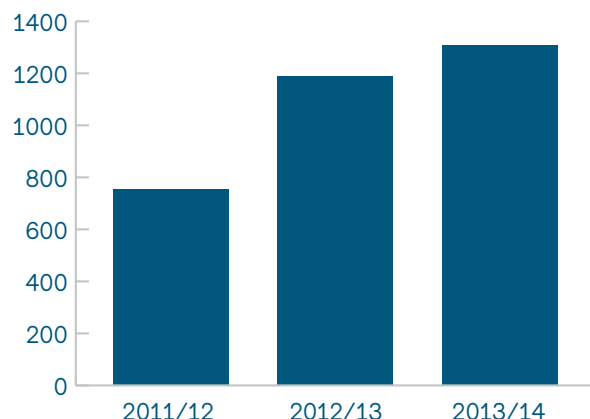
Global Solidarity

Funding from the UK Department of Foreign & International Development ended in 2008 for the position of a NI-based Global Solidarity Officer. The Global Solidarity Officer based in Dublin had taken over the activities, until a renewed Global Solidarity Committee for NI-based activists and affiliates met in February 2014.

The following affiliates were represented: INTO,UTU, NASUWT, Unison, NIPSA, Prospect, Unite, Equity, Congress Youth committee, with nominations from other affiliates who were unable to attend in person. Brian Moore (NIPSA) was elected as chair.

A new constitution was agreed, in which the committee will strive to fulfil the requirements of the Congress Constitution which states:

Non-Essential Skills Learners 2011-2014



need high res of Northern Ireland Committee

"To promote fraternal and co-operative relations with trade unions and trade union federations and congresses in other countries, for the purposes of furthering the common interests of workers in all countries.

"And further to co-operate with other types of democratic organisations in supporting progressive endeavours intended to safeguard and strengthen justice, peace and freedom throughout the world."

Despite the absence of a NI GS committee, there had been international issues which trade unions in NI have been involved in raising public awareness around, notably human trafficking, the human rights situation in Columbia and the political and humanitarian in Palestine.

Links made with campaigning organisations informed our response to the G8 summit in 2013. Belfast saw a large and completely peaceful march against the G8 agenda and the human rights policies of some of its attendees.

A new NI committee of Amnesty International's trade union network was also created and it currently works with the renewed Global Solidarity committee as both strive to establish themselves. The first joint event was held on Thursday May 8, 2014 at BURC (Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre). Speakers were:

- Mariam Abu Dheeb (via Skype), daughter of the imprisoned president of the Bahrain Teachers' Association
- Tom Headley, chair of AI UK Trade Union Network
- Brian Moore, chair of the NIC-ICTU GS committee.

Belfast also hosted the 2014 Global Solidarity Summer School. See International section of this report for more details.



TRADE UNION FRIENDS OF PALESTINE

The TUPF holds formal meetings on a bi-monthly basis in Belfast with the aim of promoting the implementation of Congress solidarity policy on Palestine. TUPF also has a broader network of trade union activists who contribute to the work of TUPF by organising within their affiliate organisation and their local areas. A number of affiliates support the work of TUPF by financial donations and are formally represented at meetings. TUPF distributes frequent reports and articles on the situation in Palestine and on developments in the Palestinian civil society Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

TUPF has continued to work closely with Congress, and with the Congress Global Solidarity Officer, in addressing issues of Israeli human rights violations, injustice and in the implementation of ICTU policy, particularly regarding support for the BDS campaign.

Academics for Palestine

TUPF has supported this important initiative through UCU links and close working relationship with academic colleagues in the south. TUPF have sponsored the production of a pamphlet, and a tour of high profile Palestinian and Israeli academic speakers to Irish universities to support the 150 plus Irish academics who have signed the boycott pledge.

TUPF have worked closely with NIC-ICTU in the establishment of a steering group of lead negotiators in public sector procurement, with a view to implementing Congress BDS policy in the public sector. TUPF sponsored the participation in a planning seminar by two Norwegian representatives, from the leading Norwegian public sector union, to help plan for effective intervention in this area.

TUPF continue to produce information and briefing material, including a pamphlet on the Russell Tribunal on Palestine.

TUPF have also organised a number of meetings on Palestine to increase awareness of the situation and to promote Congress policy. We have established a close working relationship with the recently formed

Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for BDS, which encompasses all the main Palestinian trade union bodies including the PGFTU.

In August 2014, Congress organised a peace rally in response to an escalation of violence in and around Gaza, with Israel's enormous advantage in firepower devastating the weak infrastructure in Gaza and killing large numbers of civilians.

Belfast's many Palestine solidarity groups joined together to speak with one voice:

- Trade Union Friends of Palestine
- Ireland Palestine Solidarity Committee
- Ireland Friends of Palestine and all its groups
- Sadaka
- Queen's Palestine Solidarity
- Belfast Islamic Centre
- NI Muslim Family Association
- The Centre for Global Education
- The Peace People
- Palestine Aid, and the many trade unions solidarity groups.

TUPF held a successful seminar on BDS in November 2013 from which a joint steering group has been established to develop the BDS agenda.

PART III

WORK OF THE COMMITTEES

Health & Safety Committee

Committee & Officers

Barbara Martin was re-elected as Chairperson of the NIC Health and Safety Committee at the reconstitution in May 2014, while Geraldine Alexander (NIPSA) was elected as Vice Chair.

Workers Memorial Day

Workers Memorial Day is marked all over the world on April 28. The intention is to remember all those killed or injured while at work and to strengthen our resolve to reduce risks and protect people from injury in the workplace.

In 2011, the Congress event heard from the family of David Layland, a GMB member who lost his life at his place of work, a landfill site just outside Belfast.

In 2012, the Committee, together with the Chairperson of the Enterprise Trade & Investment Committee at the NI Assembly, planted a native cherry tree in the grounds of Stormont Estate. A specially engraved plaque, sponsored by the GMB union was placed at the tree, in what was a moving ceremony.

In April 2013 and 2014, the Health & Safety Committee held a reflection ceremony at the same site tree and afterwards heard from the Chair of the Northern Ireland Committee as well as the Chief Executive of the Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, at an event in Parliament Buildings.

European Safety Week

Events for European Safety week were held in 2013 and were attended by safety reps and trade union officials.

First Woman to Win Safety Rep Award

The winner of the 2013 award was Carmen Biagioni from UNISON. Carmen is the first woman to be presented with the award and the judging panel was especially pleased that a highly commended certificate was also awarded to a woman, Karen Taylor, a UNITE Safety Representative.

The award was presented at a packed event in December 2013 and among the guest speakers were Denise Bertuchi from the Joint Union Asbestos Committee and Paddy Mackel from the Congress Education Trade Union Group.

Both spoke about the issue of asbestos in schools and reminded the event that Congress policy is to call for the safe removal of asbestos from all school buildings in Northern Ireland.

In taking this issue forward, we have written to the HSENI to ask for support for recommendations contained within a report published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Health and Safety.

Relationship with Strategic Bodies

The Health and Safety Committee continues to enjoy a good working relationship with the Health & Safety Executive of Northern Ireland. We were particularly pleased to welcome the appointment of Mr Keith Morrison as the Chief Executive of HSENI. Mr Morrison attended meetings of the Committee throughout the period.

Responding to Consultations

The Health & Safety Committee continue to respond to consultations relating to workplace health and safety (all responses available from www.ictuni.org). These have included:

- A consultation on Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- A consultation on the withdrawal of the Management Regulations Approved Code of Practice

- A consultation on changes to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (2007).

Developments in Legislation

The Health and Safety Committee was particularly pleased to learn that after sustained lobbying from Congress and affiliated unions, the Northern Ireland Executive withdrew proposals to weaken the legislation on Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR).

Following appearances at the Committee for Enterprise Trade & Investment and two robust Congress responses to consultations on RIDDOR, we learned that plans to effectively weaken the legislation were being shelved.

This is a significant development and is an excellent example of where the Northern Ireland Executive can use its devolved powers to ensure that our workplace safety legislation remains robust.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Youth Committee remains a vital part of the work and organisation of Congress and has played an active role in the anti-cuts campaign. The committee has also been active in addressing a variety of social and economic issues facing young people in Northern Ireland. The committee has been involved in a range of events over the past two years. The committee Chair is Liz Nelson-Gorman (Siptu).

Campaigning

The committee has maintained a high attendance record at various, rallies, demonstrations and events to protest attacks on public services, job losses and low pay. The committee was also active in support of various industrial disputes including the NI Water and First Source workers. The committee was extremely well represented at Pride marches in Belfast, Newry and Derry, as well as providing speakers for the Belfast May Day parade.

The committee played an integral role in the campaign against the Stormont House Agreement. Throughout this campaign committee members spoke at and chaired a variety of meetings organised

by trades' councils, played an active role in the co-ordination of leafleting in the run up to the March 13, 2015 strike action and were a visible presence at picket lines and rallies across the country.

The committee is also in the process of drafting a youth forum charter focussing on further engagement with community-based organisations working with young people across Northern Ireland.

The Northern and Southern committees of Congress Youth successfully held a two day youth conference in November 2013, with a variety of international speakers from Ireland, Greece and Spain, speaking on a range of subjects including organising young people and workers co-operatives. Both committees are currently working collaboratively on the content of a further conference.

Members of both committees meet on a regular basis to co-ordinate campaigning on matters of joint interest and discuss collaborative working initiatives.

Education & Training

The committee continues to work closely with and have been well supported by TradeMark. A number of youth committee delegates have now completed the Advanced Trade Union Leadership Award delivered by TradeMark and many delegates have attended further training events on issues such as anti-racism and anti-sectarianism. A number of delegates successfully completed a CPD course in equality delivered by University College of Dublin and TradeMark. The committee was also involved in training through the Messines Project as part of our continuing anti sectarianism work.

Communications

The committee continues to make significant gains in relation to communications strategy. We continue to utilise the committee website and regularly publish articles and contributions from various delegates. The committee successfully uses social media by regularly posting on Facebook and Twitter and our following on both continues to grow steadily. Members also undertook training on how to best use social media to increase membership and activism.

Education Trade Union Group

The ETUG is made up of teaching and support staff unions organising in the education sectors. It meets monthly and takes on a wide and varied programme of work. Paddy Mackel (NIPSA) is currently the Chair of the ETUG and Gerry Murphy (INTO) is vice Chair.

Over the period under review, the ETUG has met with the Minister for Education and civil servants within the Department of Education in relation to the impact of proposed reforms of the education system in Northern Ireland.

The Minister's proposals have been the subject of intense divisions amongst the parties at Stormont which has led to a compromise model. The unions believe the implementation of this hybrid model – along with the outworking of the accompanying rationalisation of schools programme - may adversely affect the delivery of education and could leave part of the workforce in a more vulnerable situation. This has been greatly exacerbated by the recent Stormont budget announcement that may lead to 500 teaching and 1000 support staff posts being cut in the current financial year.

In addition, the ETUG shares information and develops a common strategic approach to issues affecting teaching and support staff unions and works on the implementation of relevant motions from the NIC ICTU BDC.

HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

The committee lobbies on health policy and provides expert guidance on health issues to the Northern Ireland Committee. Anne Speed (Unison) is the current Chair of the Health Committee, while Claire Ronald (CSP) is vice Chair.

The committee has met with the Minister for Health and civil servants within the Department of Health to lobby against changes to the health system in Northern Ireland and for the re-establishment of the Partnership Forum. The Committee has also met with the Chief Medical Officer to influence the health agenda and with the Public Health Agency to encourage it to exercise its 'challenge function'

to protect the public from the adverse effects of the implementation of the Transforming Your Care programme.

Following protests over the failure to involve trade unions in NICON (NHS confederation) conferences the committee met with NICON officers in an attempt to develop a relationship between NICON and the trade unions.

In November, 2014 the committee organised a major conference under the title: Health, Safety and the Well Being of Our People – Developing a Trade Union Campaign to the Crisis in Health Care.

The conference was open to delegations from all affiliated unions and was addressed by expert speakers. The aims of the conference were to:

- Raise trade union activist's awareness of what is happening to the NHS locally and in GB.
- Consider alternative 'people centred' models of delivery for our public health services
- Assist with the development of a strategy for a NIC ICTU led campaign centred in the trade union movement and the wider community to defend and improve our public health service.

MAY DAY

Working with the Belfast Trade's Council and the NIC ICTU Youth Committee, a vibrant programme was presented for May Day 2014 and 2015 which included a range of events such as concerts, talks and debates. Several thousand joined in the largest non-sectarian public procession in Northern Ireland and the biggest May Day event on the island.

Highlights of the festival in 2014 included talks by Professor Mary Mellor, whose research focuses on the financial crisis, money systems and financial exclusion; an exhibition of radical politics explored through the t-shirt slogan, jointly presented by the Belfast Trades Council and the Golden Thread Gallery and a gig by protest singer and songwriter Grace Petrie.

In 2015, the May Festival focused on the campaign against austerity and cuts and the annual May Day rally heard from guest speakers including Mick Whelan, General Secretary of ASLEF. Trade Unions were joined by community and voluntary groups and groups from the women's sector, including the Empty Purse campaign and Reclaim the Agenda, all united under the anti-austerity banner.

RETIRED WORKERS' COMMITTEE

The Retired Workers' Committee (RWC) continues to forge ahead with an ambitious agenda under the chair of Margaret Galloway (PCS). The committee is actively represented on the National Pensioners Parliament at a regional and UK level, and its members are also active in many different arenas, including the Age Sector Platform.

Work is ongoing with the Retired Workers Committee from the Republic on a number of joint strategic initiatives and issues and a north-south meeting of the two committees was hosted recently in Liberty Hall, in January 2015.

The committee was also involved with the Age Sector Platform in campaigning on several issues:

- A basic state pension set above the official poverty level which is linked to the higher rate of earnings or price, and paid alongside other existing concessions, to provide some financial security for all;
- Increase the winter fuel grant in line with energy prices;
- Provide improved access to social and long-term care to maintain dignity in advanced years;
- End discrimination where it adversely affects the opportunities, goods and services available to older people;

This campaign has been continued through the Age Sector platform and the National Pensioners' Convention, meeting with politicians at Westminster and Stormont.

Since BDC 2009, retired workers have gained the right to speak to a motion on older people's affairs at both the all-island and the NI BDC, ensuring that retirement from the place of work does not mean an end to involvement in the trade union movement.

In 2013, a motion was passed at the Northern Ireland BDC requesting a mapping exercise of union services to retired members across the movement, with the aim of establishing best practice across all unions.

A report was commissioned by the Executive Council and completed by Congress Treasurer Joe O'Flynn, working with a sub-committee of members of both RWCs. The report made the following recommendations:

- An annual conference alternating each year north / south for retired workers to debate and publicise issues pertaining to older people.
- A draft 'model constitution' for affiliates based on mapping exercise and best practice to be adopted at an inaugural n/s Retired Workers Conference.
- Older worker representation on certain Congress committees'.
- The Retired Workers Committee should retain its autonomy regarding its pre-budget submissions but help should be available from the Congress secretariat and the Nevin Institute
- A member of the Congress secretariat to act as servicing official to the Retired Workers Committee (North/South)
- Congress secretariat to facilitate meetings between retired workers committee and relevant government Departments
- The committees North and South should retain the right to sponsor separate motions at biennial conference.

These recommendations will go forward to the Executive Council with a request that this report be considered at BDC 2015.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SUB GROUP

The EHRSG is a sub-committee of the NI Committee which extends its membership to the chairs of the NIC's self-organised groups, equality officers of affiliated unions and trade unionists on the enforcement bodies. The EHRSG's function is to develop on behalf of the Northern Ireland Committee a strategy on equality and human rights, and to co-ordinate Congress lobbies, relations and negotiations with governments, enforcement agencies and others on equality and human rights issues.

Human Rights Consortium

Congress is a member of the Human Rights Consortium which brings together nearly 200 NGOs, trade unions and other groups to campaign for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, in particular for a strong and inclusive a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

The Human Rights Consortium meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Equality Coalition

Congress is a member of the Equality Coalition which is a broad alliance of non-governmental organisations whose members cover all the categories listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (S.75), as well as other equality strands. It was founded in 1996 by community and voluntary sector organisations and trade unions.

The Equality Coalition continues to provide a forum for unity between all sectors when campaigning for equality, while allowing for the diversity of its members' work and views. It has regular engagements with government and the enforcement bodies.

The Equality coalition meets every month.

Both the Human Rights consortium and the Equality coalition have established relations with the Equality and Human Rights alliance in the Republic.

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Officers of the Women's Committee during the period covered by this report:

2012-2014

Chairperson: Theresa Devenney (ATL)
Vice Chairperson: Vivien Holding (CWU)
Secretary: Teresa Graham (NASUWT)

2014-2016

Chairperson: Vivien Holding (CWU)
Vice Chairperson: Jacquie Reid (UTU)
Secretary: Eileen Gorman (IBOA).

The committee drew up an action plan on a number of issues under the headings of Women & Society, Women in Unions and Women & Workplace. The following are the main priorities for our work:

- Gender Sensitive Response to Crisis
- Strategy for women's employment and
- Austerity having detrimental impact on Women's health

Other areas of work have included:

- Tackling violence against Women;
- Caring roles and women;
- Flexible Working Patterns;
- Equal Pay.

The Women's Committee worked closely with its equivalent in the Republic and both participated in the Women's Conference, held in Wexford in 2014 and the Seminar held in Belfast in March 2015.

Full reports of both events can be found on www.ictu.ie

Women's Council of the Isles

The committee hosted the Council of the Isles Women's Committees in Dublin in November 2013. More than 50 female trade union leaders gathered to discuss and debate issues affecting women workers. In wide reaching presentations, representatives from the ICTU, STUC, WTUC and TUC explored issues such as the impact of austerity on women's health; family leave; violence against women and older women workers. The committee participated in the 2014 Council of the Isles in London hosted by the TUC and presented on a number of topics including welfare reform and violence against women.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

The Committee organised a seminar to mark this day, in November 2104, with keynote speaker Dr Nata Duvvury from National University of Ireland Galway, who outlined the economic impact of violence against women.

The Committee continues to be represented on a range of committees and groups including:

- Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
- Women's Ad Hoc Policy Group
- Domestic Violence Partnership
- Gender Advisory Panel.
- Consultations

The Women's Committee continues to respond to consultations. During this period this included responses on:

- The Work and Families Bill
- Consultation on a Childcare Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Criminal law on Abortion: Fatal Foetal Abnormality and Sexual Crime
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy

- Assembly and Executive Review Committee Stakeholder 'Call for Evidence' Paper on Review Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly
- Human trafficking and Exploitation Bill
- Consultation on the Limited Circumstances for a Lawful Termination of Pregnancy in Northern Ireland.

DISABILITY COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Committee is Berni McCrea (UNITE). The Joint Vice chairs are Frank Warwick (IBOA) and Marcel Dummigan (NIPSA). The Secretary is Sally McKee (UTU).

The chair represents the committee at various forums including at meetings with the Equality Commission and the Human Rights Commission. The chair also attends the ICTU Equality and Human Rights Committee and the Law Centre-convened Welfare Reform Group.

The committee has organised the annual Congress Disability Seminars, in both Derry and Dublin.

The seminars and the committee meetings have been addressed by a number of high profile speakers, who have dealt with topics which have included: living with sensory disability, suicide awareness and trauma, legal developments at home and European wide, the UN Convention on Persons with Disabilities and dealing with the development of 'fit notes.'

The committee has raised serious concerns over the issue of the 'universal benefit scheme', and new regulations around Incapacity Benefit and the removal of those who have previously been awarded the benefit.

The Disability Committee has played an active role in the campaign against welfare reform in Northern Ireland and in particular it's impact of people with disabilities and their families.

LGBT COMMITTEE

The committee Chair is Daire Toner and the Secretary is Mike Hamilton (resigned 2015) and Sean Kelly from 2015 (INTO)

The committee has been actively promoting LGBT rights in the workplace and in society, in the period under review.

The committee continues to campaign to ensure that the NI Executive delivers on its commitment to publish a Sexual Orientation Strategy & Action Plan.

In pursuit of this, Congress secured a place on the Sexual Orientation Strategy Steering Group along with other LGBT Sector Organisations. The committee has also engaged with the junior ministers in relation to the publication of the strategy.

Throughout 2014 and 2015, members of the committee:

- took part in the annual Pride events in Belfast, Foyle, Newry and Dublin;
- attended Outburst Queer Arts Festivals;
- took part in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) week;
- protested outside Parliament Buildings during the Same-Sex Marriage plenary debates.

The chair represents the committee on the LGBT Consultative Forum, the Trans Forum, and IDAHOT Planning Committee, cementing the links between the trade union movement and the wider LGBT sector.

The committee continues to help develop relationships within and between affiliates and organisations within the LGBT community and has worked hard to raise awareness and effect positive change for all LGBT members.

MIGRANT WORKERS

The migrant and minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland is still relatively small. The 2011 Census recorded that migrants in Northern Ireland make up just 4.5% of population, whereas those describing themselves as ethnic minority were 1.8% of the population.

Although in recent years the government, trade unions and voluntary organisations in have taken some positive measures towards providing better support to migrant and minority ethnic workers, much still needs to be done to ensure they enjoy equality in employment, education and health, feel safe in their neighbourhoods and experience a sense of belonging.

Unfortunately, in the current economic downturn attitudes towards immigrants have also worsened. They are often demonised as the cause of society's problems, from 'taking jobs,' to 'draining public services.'

In 2014 we saw a marked increase in racial tensions and intensified, orchestrated violence against ethnic minorities here. In response to this trend Congress, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) and Amnesty International organised an anti-racist rally which was the most ethnically diverse Belfast had ever seen. More than 8,000 people attended.

Congress Project Officer, Kasia Garbal addressed the rally. She called for an unambiguous, public, unified stand from our politicians, church, civic and community leaders to affirm that prejudice and hatred were not acceptable in our society.

All speakers also called for a much delayed Racial Equality Strategy to be published as a matter of urgency, to set out a policy and practical actions to challenge racism.

The Racial Equality Strategy was published subsequently, but fell short of expectations and aspirations of the civic society and minority ethnic communities in particular. A number of organisations came together in the Common Platform to produce a unified response and campaign for a strategy which



has the potential to make a real difference to the lives of migrant and ethnic minority people here.

Congress has been one of the key drivers of the initiative with Kasia Garbal as co-chair of the Common Platform. In particular, the Common Platform paper- signed by over 80 organisations to date - advocates that the strategy recognises the contribution of ethnic minorities, commits to the reform of race equality legislation and addresses key inequalities in employment, education and health and institutes firm governance and accountability mechanisms.

Additionally, there is an urgent need to establish an evidence base and produce an action plan in response to the challenges identified. The Common Platform has met with representatives of the Office of the First Minister/ Deputy First Minister

(OFMDFM) and presented evidence to the OFMDFM scrutiny committee.

Migrant Workers Support Unit

The Migrant Workers Support Unit (MWSU) has been in operation since in 2007. The main aim is to pursue the implementation of Congress policies by working towards the elimination of racism, discrimination, exploitation and barriers in accessing services for migrant workers.

The MWSU has both strategic responsibilities of policy development through linking with relevant stakeholders and trade unions, a coordinating role of establishing a network of employment rights clinics in cooperation with Trades Councils, trade unions and migrant support organisations, mapping and collating information on migrant workers, as well

as organising training, seminars and information sessions.

The Belfast office continues to operate a permanent Migrant Workers Employment Rights Centre as well as providing outreach clinics in other locations. In the last year, the unit has dealt with over 400 people, through a combination of advice centre, clinics and information sessions. From the initial contact with our organisation, migrant workers can join a trade union, thus benefiting from its services and increased protection in their employment.

Research into experiences of migrant workers in employment - It's Not How they Should Treat People published - by the MWSU in 2014, showed that migrant workers remain hard to reach and vulnerable to exploitation.

Their experience in the workplace is often characterised by a lack of written contracts, the prevalence of casual or zero-hour contracts, long working hours, difficulties with pay and in accessing in-work entitlements, such as leave.

Migrant workers continue to experience racism and discrimination which can have devastating consequences for workers, for their relationship with employers and colleagues, their experience of work, career progression and professional development and their relationship with the wider community.

The knowledge of employment rights continues to be limited and access to protection is not always easy. The onset of recession and the economic downturn increase the vulnerability of many workers, unwilling to challenge inappropriate working practices for fear of losing employment.

The report made the following recommendations:

1. There is a continuous need to provide targeted services supporting migrant workers in the workplace. The Department for Employment and Learning should consider extending the funding to include resources for Tribunal representation.
2. There is a continuous need to challenge racism and racist discrimination in the workplace. This includes challenging indirect discrimination and should extend beyond the provision of training and development of workplace policies to

creating opportunities for integration of migrant workers with local workforce.

3. The Department for Employment and Learning and other bodies, such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, should support research into positive practices in employing migrant workers, with a focus on examples of best practice in providing equal access to rights and to workplace integration.
4. There is a continuous need to raise awareness of the trade unions amongst migrant workers and for the unions to actively recruit and organise migrant workers.
5. The establishment of a single inspection and employment rights enforcement body should be considered as a matter of urgency.

We have established important partnerships with black and ethnic minority support organisations and other social partners. We are represented on the Board of Northern Ireland Migration Partnership, Belfast Migrant Forum, Migrant Centre NI and others.

We became partners of Northern Ireland's Council for Ethnic Minorities Integro project, whose main focus was employment and employability as main barriers to integration for non-EU migrants. Recognising the crucial role of active engagement of these migrants with trade union structures, we organised a residential training which centred on employment and integration, as well as recognition of qualifications and support for employability.

The Your Rights at Work manual has been updated and new language versions developed. They are now available in English, Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Slovak, Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Latvian and Spanish.

All the above publications are available from NIC-ICTU office.

STRAND TWO: NORTH/ SOUTH & ALL ISLAND

The North/South Committee comprises members of the Executive Council and the Northern Ireland Committee. The membership is:

Larry Broderick (IBOA); Brian Campfield (NIPSA); Shay Cody (IMPACT); Colm Cronin (Cork Council of Trade Unions); Eamon Devoy (TEEU); Pamela Dooley (UNISON); John Douglas (MANDATE); Tom Geraghty (PSEU); Avril Hall-Callaghan (UTU); Jimmy Kelly (UNITE); Eugene McGlone (UNITE); Patricia McKeown (UNISON); Jim Moore (UCATT) Gerry Murphy (INTO); Jack O'Connor (SIPTU); Seamus Searson (NASUWT); Anne Speed (UNISON); David Begg (Congress, Retired March 2015)

The purpose of the committee is to develop key North/South initiatives in developing all-island socio-economic initiatives and influence, where possible, the policies originating from all six cross-border bodies under the auspices of the N/S Ministerial Council.

Crucial to the work of the committee is the pursuance of the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

and the Charter of Rights for the Republic, as set out in the Good Friday Agreement (GFA).

It is most disappointing that these elements of the GFA have not been introduced in both jurisdictions despite being components of an international agreement. The N/S Committee members had a meeting with the Joint Oireachtas Working Group on the Implementation of the GFA, which has members from the Oireachtas, Stormont and Westminster.

A copy of the proceedings is available on www.ictuni.org

The N/S Committee, through the offices of the Congress General Secretary sought a meeting with then Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore to impress upon the Irish Government that they have a duty to fulfill the commitment made in the GFA. The failure to implement the full terms of the GFA, particularly those centred on rights issues, poses a threat to achieving a peaceful and just Northern Ireland.

The committee is of the view that an all-island public procurement task force, which was part of the Towards 2016 negotiations is another issue which remains unfulfilled. An all-island public procurement strategy, which utilised the social clauses of the EU 2011 Directive, is a vehicle for creating a stimulus for the economy throughout the island, assisting the marginalised into employment and protecting employment rights for workers involved.



Caption

STRAND THREE: COUNCIL OF THE ISLES

The Council of the Isles is an annual meeting of the trade union centres on these islands. It comprises the Trade Union Congress (TUC) of England, the Scottish TUC, the Wales TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

The Council of the Isles originated from the Good Friday Agreement (Strand III, East-West) relations and discusses issues of mutual concern and examines areas of potential cooperation.

2014 Meeting: LONDON

The 2014 meeting took place at the TUC in London on January 17/18 and was attended by:

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, TUC
Kevin Rowan, Organisation and Services, TUC
Grahame Smith, General Secretary, STUC
Harry Frew, President, STUC
Martin Mansfield, General Secretary, WTUC
David Evans, President, WTUC
David Begg, General Secretary, ICTU
John Douglas, President, ICTU
Pamela Dooley, Chair, NIC-ICTU
Peter Bunting, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU

Frances O'Grady spoke on the main issues affecting the TUC, including a series of elections at local and European level, in 2014, and the general election in 2015. The TUC has succeeded in putting on the political and media agenda issues such as:

- Living standards and the working poor
- Fair pay and a fair share of an economic recovery
- Retention of public services
- Reform of corporate governance
- Creation of democratic workplace structures
- New architecture on organising
- How the TUC shares its mission with the British Labour Party.

Martin Mansfield gave a brief overview of the current situation in Wales. The Wales Labour Party seems different from the 'main' Labour Party and in Wales, devolution is greatly supported. The Wales TUC has good relations with its First Minister.

It is worth noting that working through the Council of the Isles networks, the NIC was able to organise a major public procurement event, which took place in April 2014.

At the London gathering, the STUC's Grahame Smith outlined the debate going on within the Scottish trade union movement on that country's referendum on independence. This contribution was extremely detailed and too complex for this report, but for those interested in this important political debate, the STUC have a have posted material online on all of the important issues for trade unionists.

Visit: <http://www.ajustscotland.org/>

Congress General Secretary David Begg and President John Douglas briefed the Council on the huge economic difficulties confronting the trade union movement in the Republic of Ireland.

The General Secretary also briefed the Council on the main priorities arising from the Commission for Trade Unions:

- Resources
- Organising
- Establishing a Trade Union College
- The Nevin Economic Research Institute

The Council considered matters impacting on the trade union movement in Northern Ireland and decided to support the NIC-ICTU Demand for Action Rally on 31 January, 2015.

The General Secretary of the TUC agreed to correspond with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the failure of the Haass talks and the non-implementation of a Bill of Rights for all who live in Northern Ireland.

2015 Meeting: GLASGOW

The 2015 meeting was hosted by the STUC on March 2/3, 2015 and was attended by:

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, TUC
Kevin Rowan, Organisation and Services, TUC
Leslie Manasseh, President, TUC
Grahame Smith, General Secretary, STUC
Dave Moxham, Ass General Secretary, STUC
June Minnery, President, STUC
Martin Mansfield, General Secretary, WTUC
Shiela Bearcroft, President, WTUC
David Begg, General Secretary, ICTU
Patricia King, General Secretary Designate, ICTU
John Douglas, President, ICTU
Peter Bunting, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU

A short opening address was given by the Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, John Swinney.

The main themes considered were:

1. Fair Pay and Decent work – STUC/TUC
2. TTIP – STUC/ICTU
3. Public Services – WTUC and ICTU NI
4. Devolution/The Smith Commission (STUC)
5. The Stormont House Agreement.

Fair Pay & Decent Work

The TUC Seeking to establish Wage Council System and Collective Bargaining Rights. The STUC pursuing Living Wage Campaign.

TTIP

The TUC engaging with the UK's Business Secretary. Unions have moved to a position of opposition. It is the 'most frequently raised subject' at the 'open' Scottish Cabinet meetings, by members of the public.

Public Services

Full discussion on NI Stormont House Agreement. WTUC outlined their Workforce Partnership Council with Wales' First Minister and their proposed Public Service Staff Commission. The Wales TUC is looking

at Public Procurement Model and ILO Decent Work 'legislation' in line with sustainable earnings.

Industrial

The TUC outlined new balloting regulations – defend simple majority industrial ballots. The withdrawal of check-off facilities for trade unions in all government departments. This is now spreading to general public services and the private sector.

NERI analysis of the Stormont House Agreement (January 2015)

WHAT UK GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL PACKAGE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND?

It has been widely claimed by political leaders and widely reported that there will be £2 Billion of additional money for Northern Ireland as a result of the Stormont House Agreement.

This analysis demonstrates that in our opinion the only new money available to the NI Executive is capital funding for shared and integrated education to the amount of £500 Million over a ten year period and £150 Million funding for dealing with the past.

Welfare Reform

- Full introduction of Welfare Reform with hardship fund to be paid for from Block Grant.
- Hardship fund was proposed in earlier negotiations between NI Executive parties.
- No indication of how much money is being allocated or where such money can be found from within existing Block Grant funding.
- The 2015/16 Draft budget makes an allowance for a hardship fund of only £70m.

	(£m's)				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
Existing RRI Allowance	£200	£200	£200	£200	£800
TBUC	£64	£26	£10		£100
Extra Borrowing powers	+£100m	+£100m	+£100m	+£50m	+£350m
Redundancy scheme	-£200m	-£200m	-£200m	-£100m	-£700
RRI Allowance post VRS and excluding TBUC	£100	£100	£100	£150	£450

RRI Borrowing

- Up to £700m over 4 years to fund Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.
- This is made up of £350m of existing RRI borrowing Allowance and additional £350m extra borrowing allowance from Treasury as set out in table below.
- There is NO extra £700m coming from Treasury in either borrowing or increased contributions.

Voluntary Redundancy Scheme

- Document sets out that if all £700m in borrowing is used, savings to NI Executive net of interest payments would be in the region of £330m per year.
- There is no prescribed or proposed destination for this £330m.

Corporation Tax

- Clear that any devolution of corporation tax will be for the rate of the tax only.
- Document states that if any reductions are made to the rate of Corporation tax in Northern Ireland, both direct and behavioural effects of such a change will be borne by the NI block grant.
- This opens the door to unforeseen further reductions to the NI block grant if GB-based companies move operations to NI for tax purposes.

- It could be interpreted that if any international investor were to choose Northern Ireland over a GB destination owing to a lower rate of corporation tax, NI would be liable for this cost.

Additional Funding

- Only £650m can be considered as additional funding.
- £50m over 10 years (£500m) to fund capital investment shared education services only (TBUC funding can be used for both housing and education)

- £30 over 5 years (150m) to fund various commissions and bodies dealing with "the past".

Asset Sales

- The document states that funds from the sale of state assets can be used to repay:
- £100m loan granted by the Treasury to the NI Executive in late 2014
- Whatever portion of the £114m welfare fine is liable after the successful passage of an UK – compliant NI Welfare Reform bill

Where does the £2bn come from?

- It is over 10 years

Capital Funding for Shared Education	£500	New Money
Funding for bodies dealing the past	£150	
Extra RRI Allowance	£350	New Borrowing
Voluntary redundancy Scheme	£700	Money that would have had to come from block grant
Repayment of Treasury loan	£100	
Payment of Welfare fine	£114	

- In reality the total amount of RRI borrowing available for investment in infrastructure will be £350m less. We give up £700m of existing borrowing to pay for redundancies and only receive £350m extra borrowing to compensate for it.

- Additionally the Draft 2015-16 budget made no allowance for payment of the £114m welfare fine, so the ability to use funds from the sale of assets to pay for this does not represent an improvement to the 2015/16 position.

- The 2015/16 Draft budget set aside £100m from the capital budget to repay the Treasury loan, therefore any funds that alleviate that burden will return to the capital budget.

- There is £650 of additional funds as set out above but both these funding streams are narrowly focussed and pale in comparison to reductions in the block grant since 2010.

Image to be placed here

Caption

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SECTION 6
SOCIAL
PROTECTION



6

THE CASE FOR SOCIAL INVESTMENT

The Social protection budget stands at €26.8 billion and is the biggest expenditure of government, making it is central to the political economy of the nation.

What trends are presenting which might challenge us in the future?

First, there is the constraint on policy choice represented by a debt burden over €200 billion. It costs nearly €8 billion a year just to service this debt, roughly equivalent to the entire education budget. The fiscal freedom available to government to advance important public goods like childcare, for example, is limited.

Second, low economic growth over the medium term - or secular stagnation as it is called - means that the additional resources from a rapidly growing economy are not going to be available in the way they were in the past.

The principal reason for this, apart from cyclical economic conditions, is ageing. The French economist, Thomas Piketty, maintains that demography accounts for half the economic growth rate. Ageing, of course, also means higher health, caring and pension costs.

A fourth challenge is housing provision. Fewer people are likely to be able to afford their own homes. Some 5% of the social protection budget currently goes on housing. This can only increase.

The final challenge is the biggest of all. The post-war welfare state model is based on the concept of a male breadwinner household and an extended family caring network. The aim is to provide transfers to fend off poverty arising from social risks. In general it has been an effective system.

But family structures are changing. The feminisation of the labour force means that family provided child care and elder care is much less available. Also active labour market programmes are increasingly essential to maintaining the employability of people.

As argued by Anton Hemerijck (2013) this calls for a shift towards a social investment welfare model. The concept of investment is important because it is predicated on equipping people with the skills and public goods (e.g. childcare) to allow high levels of labour force participation in well paid, high productivity jobs. In that way a tax



base capable of funding social investment can be sustained. It is about creating a virtuous circle.

The Threat Posed by TTIP

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a proposed free trade agreement between the United States (US) and the European Union (EU). It is a new type of free trade agreement in that its primary focus is not on tariff barriers, but on harmonising regulatory regimes.

Congress, and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the AFL-CIO in the United States, have strong reservations about this proposed agreement.

Congress has organised seminars to raise awareness about TTIP among trade union members. We have published articles and contributed to conferences organised by the EU Parliament, have made submissions and met with Minister Bruton and his officials, on this issue.

Since the early 2000s the US and EU, highlighting the key role that regulatory cooperation can play in building a strong transatlantic relationship, have stressed the need to promote better regulation, minimise divergence and facilitate transatlantic commerce. These tenets are now becoming a reality through the TTIP, designated by EU Commission

President Juncker as one of the Commission's 10 key priorities.

The focus of TTIP is the liberalisation of trade and investment and both the European Commission and the US have decided that what they regard as unnecessary regulations should be eliminated, reduced or prevented.

Both sides are in favour of policies marked by 'regulatory coherence' and 'regulatory cooperation'. According to the European Commission, "the aim is a more integrated transatlantic marketplace that respects each side's right to regulate the protection of health, safety and the environment at a level it considers appropriate."

Attitudes to free trade changed radically in the Republic of Ireland with the first Programme for Economic Expansion in the late 1950s. This was followed by the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in 1965 and ultimately by European Economic Community (EEC) membership in 1974. Ireland is therefore broadly supportive of free trade agreements because, as a small open economy, a rules based system provides better prospects for fairness between countries, regardless of size.

That said, on the basis of the available information, there are reasons for considerable caution about TTIP and scepticism about the 'job-creating claims' made in its favour.

As we currently understand it, TTIP is intended to:

- Reduce regulatory (rather than tariff) barriers to trade and investment.
- Harmonise rules in relation to trade in goods and services.
- Create a common commercial environment.

The conclusion of the North-American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) in 1994 was an important milestone in trade liberalisation. NAFTA, which encompasses the United States, Mexico and Canada, provides a significant benchmark for TTIP.

The success of the European Union has been evident in the creation of a single European market (or something approaching a single market) while maintaining some aspects of a 'European social model' which provides for employment, social, cultural and environmental rights and interest.

However, it must be noted that recent court rulings (e.g. Viking and Laval) in the area of national and EU cross-border employment rights as well as the development of a strong neoliberal agenda in Europe - emphasising competition, privatisation (by default), fiscal rules to the detriment of social outcomes and 'structural reform' in the labour market - have undermined the European social model.

This in turn has served to undermine union, worker and broader political support for the entire project, as any member state election in recent years will demonstrate.

Indeed, the European elections of May 2014 signaled a growing disconnect between governments, the institutions of the union and large segments of European civil society.

All of this is not without significance as context for the pursuit of the TTIP deal.

Now that NAFTA moves to join up more closely with the European Union, can we expect a 'levelling up' more than a 'levelling down' of environmental and labour standards? Recent trends in both continents - apart from any specific detail in the negotiations - suggest a levelling down.

The experience of NAFTA suggests very mixed results with a growth in trade and in GDP in the countries involved, but also large displacement of jobs and a growth in precarious, low pay employment along the Mexican-US border and in Mexico itself.

The following aspects of TTIP are of particular concern:

1. **Investor-State Dispute Mechanism (ISDS)** This proposal is an affront to democracy insofar as it allows investors to sue governments in secret courts composed of corporate lawyers - at which others have no representation - for compensation over national laws or rules that affect their activities. This quasi-legal process is not subject to judicial review. An increasing number of cases of this type are already in train and TTIP will give investors a clear and certain privilege over citizens. The reality is that big business is engaged in an orgy of litigation, whose purpose is to strike down any law that might impinge on its anticipated future profits. The tobacco firm Philip Morris is suing governments in Uruguay and Australia for trying to discourage people from smoking. The oil firm Occidental was awarded \$2.3bn in compensation from Ecuador, which terminated the company's drilling concession in the Amazon, after finding that Occidental had broken Ecuadorean law. The Swedish company Vattenfall is suing the German government for shutting down nuclear power. An Australian firm is suing El Salvador's government for \$300m for refusing permission for a goldmine over concerns it would poison the drinking water. Even The Economist newspaper, a bastion of liberalism, is opposed to ISDS (October 11th 2014).
2. **Public Services** There is real potential under TTIP to undermine public services such as the National Health Service by forcing governments to cede contracts to private providers under pain of ISDS actions.
3. **Employment Rights** Corporations may be able to challenge collective agreements as 'barriers' to trade and investment, thereby accelerating a race to the bottom in employment standards.
4. **Inequality** The period since 1980 has seen a phenomenal increase in inequality in developed countries which is likely to be exacerbated by TTIP.



5. **Harmonisation** Trade unions have long been aware of certain sections of the EU elite pursuing the objective of aligning EU labour markets with those of the US to the huge detriment of workers in the former.

In summary the concern of Congress is that TTIP is a manifestation of an aggressive neoliberalism aimed at so circumscribing the policy space for governments that politics will be separated from economics, such that it will not matter what kind of government is elected.

It will, in other words, complete the subjugation of society to markets. Moreover, this issue has to be seen in the context of a European integration project which has lost a lot of its legitimacy in the eyes of workers over the last few years of austerity policies.

Many people saw deepening integration as an antidote to globalisation, but it now looks as if it has exacerbated the impact of globalisation. If you have free trade and free circulation of capital and people but destroy the social state, the temptations of defensive nationalism and identity politics will very likely grown stronger.

Social Welfare Pensions: Changes to PRSI Rate Bands (360)

In 2013 the Department of Social Protection changed the Rate Band qualification for the Contributory State Pension, thereby requiring

workers to have an annual average of more than 29 contributions to qualify for the full contributory pension.

Congress predicted that this change would impact disproportionately on women and, sadly, our prediction has been borne out by experience. The unfair and arbitrary change sees 66% of men receiving the full contributory pension in 2014, while only 36% of women were awarded the maximum.

While 205 men will lose €1,500 p.a. by virtue of this new arrangement, more than double this number of women - 563 - have had this cut imposed on their incomes in perpetuity.

Congress made representations to the Department of Social Protection and to various Oireachtas committees on this matter but, thus far, to no avail.

Changes to the State Pension

The government decided the State Pension (Transition) would be discontinued in 2014, thereby increasing the State Pension age for all to 66 years, with a further increase up to 67 years in 2021 and to 68 years in 2028.

Congress took the view that this was a most unacceptable way to introduce change and lobbied government and the had our views reported in the media, on this critical issue. The key point of our submission to government was as follows:

“Workers are being deprived of a significant benefit they earned and paid for. The measure is not designed to help older workers to stay in employment. Employers and unions were given no opportunity to consider the complex labour market issues involved. Ireland is going further and faster in this regard than every other country in the EU. No-one has explained to the Irish public why we must have the highest public pension age in the EU. This measure makes nonsense of the advice that the Pension Board give about financial planning for retirement. This measure flies in the face of the principles of pension reform. This measure was contrived by politicians and public officials who will continue to enjoy good pensions from age 65 and earlier.”

The Case for Decent Childcare

Congress continues to call for more public investment in universal quality childcare. Because of our market-based model, parents face some of the highest childcare costs anywhere in Europe.

Childcare costs in Ireland as a percentage of wages are the highest in the EU - over 40% of average wages, while the EU average is just 23.8%.

This hampers the ability of parents’ to work, train or study, while forcing families to make difficult financial choices.

Our costs compare very unfavourably with countries such as Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and France.

Many other countries also invest in childcare at a higher level than we do in Ireland, and for very good reasons. The Nevin Economic Research Institute has pointed to the benefits of such investment, and the fact that the benefits are more pronounced for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. These include:

- improved literacy and numeracy
- longer education participation
- better labour market outcomes, including allowing women to return to work more quickly
- better life outcomes

■ reduced societal costs from crime etc

■ benefits to children’s parents

■ additional future tax revenues

See: <http://www.nerinstitute.net/research/investing-in-our-children-scandinavian-childcare-for-ireland/>

It is crucial that while dealing with the issue of affordability, we do not overlook or neglect the importance of providing high quality childcare. Affordability and quality must go hand.

Congress notes the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group on the Early Years Strategy, which published its advice to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, in October 2013. The Expert Advisory Group called for an entitlement to free preschool for all children from their third birthday, until such time as they enter school, but stressed that measures to raise standards must be introduced first.

We also note the work of the Department of Children & Youth Affairs in drafting the National Children’s and Young People’s Policy Framework (CYPPF), which will set out the vision, national outcomes and aims for young people for the next five years and participated in a consultation event, in late 2013.

Affordability & Quality

We believe that the right to childcare should be a cornerstone of future economic and social policies - in both jurisdictions of the island - and will continue to campaign for affordable, quality childcare for all.

A key component in the provision of quality childcare is ensuring that workers in the sector are properly paid and have access to career development opportunities.

Trade union members were among the more than 500 childcare workers who held a rally outside Leinster House, Dublin, in February 2015, in pursuit of better funding for the essential service they provide.

The protest was organised by the Association of Childhood Professionals (ACP), which seeks to highlight the work childcare professionals do, supporting children and families at the foundation stage of development.



The intent of the protest was to highlight the huge discrepancy between rhetoric about the importance of early childhood care and the fact the people entrusted with this critical task are on low pay, with many earning just the Minimum Wage: the average hourly wage for a fully qualified childcare worker is between €8.65 and €10.50, according to Early Childhood Ireland. Protestors also called for increased regulation in the private sector to stamp out bad practices.

In the community sector, funding must be increased to ensure workers are paid in accordance with their qualifications and the importance of their work. Trade unions have continued to make the case that a high quality, affordable childcare service cannot be delivered without investing in skilled and committed workers.

Finally, Congress participated in an open policy seminar on future options for investment in childcare organised by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs (March 31, 2015).

Parental Leaves

The seminar was organised under the auspices of the Inter-Departmental Group on Future Investment in Early Years and School Age Care & Education. This group was set up by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs to carry out an economic and cost benefit analysis of policies and future options for increasing the supply, accessibility and affordability

of quality child care and education. It is to report to government by June 2015.

In recent months, a series of media reports have indicated that government is considering proposals to introduce paternity leave and to lengthen parental leave to one year. This is a welcome sign that our work in this area is starting to bear fruit. To date, we have no indication whether any new leave entitlement would be paid.

However, Ireland is the only EU member state that provides no period of well-paid leave, so the fact that the government is reportedly examining measures to ensure that Ireland (finally) catches up with other EU member states can be said to represent some degree of progress.

Paid paternity leave is also being talked about as a separate entitlement and Congress will continue to work to ensure that maternity leave remains fully intact. Combined with the introduction of accessible affordable, quality childcare (including the introduction of a second free year pre-school year) this could lead to a vastly improved situation for working families.

Following the 2013 transposition of the Parental Leave Directive, Congress continued to press for family leave here to be brought up to EU standards. Along with the National Women's Council and Start Strong, we developed a common platform on progressive changes to our Leaves system to seek, in order to influence the Family Leaves Bill.

We met with officials of the Department of Justice & Equality and with Minister Kathleen Lynch and Minister Aodhan O Riordain to state our case.

Subsequently in September 2014, we organised a Family Leaves seminar (in Dublin) that was attended by Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald and Minister of State O' Riordain. More information available here: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/worklifebalance1.html>

The event was well covered by print and broadcast media, including an Irish Times Op Ed by keynote speaker, Peter Moss and national radio interviews for Congress. The campaign has continued to attract media attention and some support from perhaps unlikely sources - including the front page of the Irish Independent on November 25, 2013: <http://www.independent.ie/news/what-it-says-in-the-papers-30771879.html>

Minister O'Riordain has since signalled the introduction of Paternity Leave and Congress will work and build support for this, in the lead up to Budget 2016. Our proposals have also been included as possible options in the overall childcare debate.

In relation to the ongoing EU discussions regarding the proposed Maternity Leave or Pregnant Workers Directive, Congress wrote to MEPs urging them to support its revision in 2014.

More recently, we called on government to save the proposal to revise the Directive, which has been on the table since 2010 and is now threatened with withdrawal by the European Commission, which characterises it as 'red tape.'

This threat runs entirely counter to the European Union's rhetoric on gender equality, effective work-life balance and, of course, the centrality of Social Europe.

It would appear that the 'better regulation' agenda (REFIT) is in fact a vehicle to dismantle such critical social supports and initiatives, in the name of greater 'efficiency'.

Image to be placed here

Caption

SECTION 7 CONGRESS ORGANISATION





CONGRESS ORGANISATION

The most significant development in organisational terms is the changeover at the top of Congress. David Begg is standing down after fourteen years as General Secretary, making him and Peter Cassells jointly the two longest serving General Secretaries since Congress was established in 1959.

David is succeeded by Patricia King, formerly vice-President of SIPTU and the vice-President of Congress. The Northern Ireland Officer, Peter Bunting, Assistant General Secretary is also scheduled to retire after fourteen years in the post later this year. This is a major change by any standards. (NEED AMEND XXXXX)

Trade Union Commission on Organisation

The Executive Council and General Purposes Committee, in particular, invested considerable time and effort endeavouring to implement the Report of the Commission Future Positive – Trade Unions & the Common Good (2013) adopted by BDC 2013.

Unfortunately, it is possible to report only limited success.

Specifically, it was not possible to reach agreement on a new federal structure and constitution as envisaged. Neither was it possible to reach a consensus on an alternative approach based on a Trade Union Renewal Trust.

On a more positive note there was widespread support for a range of practical innovations and good progress was made towards advancing these projects as outlined in this report. If we accept that a more selective, optional and voluntary approach to consolidation is favoured by affiliates then it follows that a multi-speed process will ensue. It is important, however, that those unions wishing to take initiatives should be facilitated to do so via a Development Fund. It cannot be pretended that this is an optimal outcome but it is all that is possible at this time.

Image to be placed here

Caption

Some of the initiatives undertaken were:

(1) CORK PROJECT

At BDC 2009, it was agreed to establish a Trade Union Commission to undertake a review of the structure of the union movement and make recommendations on how it might be refashioned to meet future challenges.

An interim report presented to BDC 2011 – A Call to Action – which recommended a programme of work to be undertaken by the trade union movement. The report was unanimously endorsed by conference through an enabling motion. A Strategic Organising Committee was subsequently established to take forward the recommendations of the Commission.

The Strategic Organising Committee identified a number of work streams as priorities and asked that detailed work be carried out on these:

- a) identify actions to increase capacity to organise and represent more effectively,
- b) finalise a strategic communications policy,
- c) survey of resources for collaboration on cost efficiencies and

- d) the establishment of a Union college.

Pilot Project

The Cork Pilot Project was established to address recommendation (a) and in part recommendation (c), where it was envisaged a range of collaborative actions and partnerships would be established.

It was envisaged that the learning from this could be applied to other locations across the island.

The initial exercise in Summer 2014 was essentially information gathering to gain a better understanding of the employment composition in Cork and ascertain trade union presence within that workforce.

It resulted in the collection of a range of employment statistics, including multi-union data and information.

The second phase saw a series of research strands conducted, again to seek a better understanding of the situation for workers and members on the ground in Cork and to ascertain their views, opinions and expectations of work and the trade union movement.

Project Purpose

- To centralise resources and work collaboratively in Cork to develop and test innovative approaches to build trade union power and

influence, learn from those experiences for future developments and put in place an effective infrastructure, systems, processes and working methods for a 'One Trade Union Centre' approach;

- Reconfigure and consolidate union activity within Cork in order to increase its effectiveness and influence on the workplace and working conditions, by facilitating the better organisation and participation of workers in unions;
- Embrace and combine existing local activities including Trades Councils, Congress Centres, local training initiatives, the Youth Connect programme, Union Connect, the retired members' networks, Young Workers Network etc.

Key Project Aims

The key aims of this project are to:

- Build a broad community of interest to fight collectively for and achieve a fair economic resolution;
- Educate, build awareness, improve understanding about and empathy towards trade unionism;
- Achieve political gains by mobilising locally for policy outcomes that advance the interests of working people;
- Achieve a strong and coherent voice, profile and presence through a planned and co-ordinated media approach;
- Develop and deepen connections with priority constituencies not in membership, including the unemployed and precarious workers, through the provision of supports and services;
- Organise.

How Workers See Unions: Research Outcomes

Since October 2014, the following strands of research have taken place inside and outside the trade union movement:

- Quantitative research of Cork workers by Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A) [300 surveyed];
- Qualitative research of Cork workers by B&A [three groups totally approx. 24];
- Qualitative research of multi-union members by Congress [eight groups totally approx. 64];
- Quantitative research of students based in UCC and CIT [409];
- Qualitative research of activists and officials at Cork Activist Forum [125]

A qualitative and quantitative research study was undertaken by Behaviour & Attitudes during November 2014. Some 300 surveys were taken across the county of Cork with approximately 24 participants attending focus groups.

The objectives of the research included;

- to understand the views of the Cork City workforce in terms of their work life and the role and remit of trade unions in particular;
- to gauge an understanding of how respondents feel about work, from a range of perspectives (sense of security/insecurity, work-related aspirations, current versus future wage expectations, etc.);
- to identify broad perceptions of unions in Ireland today. Explore the barriers and potential triggers to union membership. A greater understanding/awareness of the potential role/benefits of union membership to workers like themselves;
- Specific issues of importance workers feel unions can help them with (on a spontaneous and prompted basis);
- Reactions to concepts such as Living Wage, Decent Work, etc. Do these concepts resonate with workers?
- To gauge workers' propensity to act [and/or campaign] on issues of concern to them, at work and outside work. Precisely what it might take to spark individuals to act upon such issues in a constructive fashion;

- Identify and explore union reputational issues, and how any negative connotations might best be addressed;
- Explore what people expect from a/their union, including membership fulfillment and communications.

Trade Union Focus Groups

Eight internal trade union focus groups took place during November, December 2014 and January 2015 involving 64 members from approximately 11 trade unions. Participants came from both private and public sector employments, were of mixed ages but predominantly 35+, and were representative of both genders.

During this exercise there were many key challenges which participants identified for the movement. However, what stood out about the exercise is that members saw the real value in a strong trade union movement, knew why they joined and indicated a willingness to engage in order to enable the movement to become more effective and influential, particularly at a local level. They also saw the value of this project.

There was a genuine willingness by participants to engage in the process, a desire to see real substantive and meaningful change for the benefit of workers and for the movement to take what they considered to be its rightful place in influencing and upholding the rights and conditions of workers.

For many it was their first time to engage in such an activity, particularly relating to their work and their union, and they were delighted to be included and hoped that there would be more of this 'type of this engagement' into the future.

Cork Activist Forum

A forum for activists took place on Saturday, January 17 (2015) in University College Cork (UCC). The aims of the forum included: to appraise local union activists and union officials about the project, hear the views of the participants and provide an opportunity for activists to become involved and decide the next steps to be taken in the project.

There was an excellent turnout for the forum, despite the weather, with approximately 125 participants

attending from a total of 137 union nominees, representing 15 trade unions and two student unions.

The sessions were highly interactive with participants allocated to tables to ensure that discussions took place among several unions with a diversity of feedback. There was excellent engagement and the forum resulted in a wealth of information and opinions from participants in terms of what they wished to see happen and how they would like to see the trade union movement restructure for the future.

The forum followed on from intensive research activity (see above).

The theme from each of the research strands echoed each other in terms of some of the challenges which activists perceive are facing the trade union movement. The participants at the forum were set a number of themes and questions and responses were collected for analysis.

Third-level Student Research

This research was conducted as part of the fourth research strand in the Cork Pilot project, in an attempt to ascertain the level of awareness among the student group of the trade union movement and to understand better their working patterns, conditions of employment - if at work - and their concerns.

Following discussions with the student unions of UCC and CIT, it was agreed that the survey would be conducted on each of their respective campuses, at a time which was most suitable. A sample survey, mirroring the type of questions already asked by B&A of workers in the Cork area, was discussed with both SUs for suitability along with potential dates.

The first survey took place at the UCC campus in November 2014 where 206 students agreed to participate. The second survey was conducted in February 2015 at the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) campus, the delay resulting from the different semester system within CIT. There were 209 respondents from this survey.

Respondents were self-selected on the basis that they were approached by us and willing to engage.

Arising from the research analysis, the pilot project group is agreeing the key priority outcomes for the short to medium term, which will be progressed by individual working groups based in Cork.

The research also identified the following potential target areas for collaborative action which will be considered by this group:

- Capacity building for local activists across a range of coherent topics;
- Site-specific multi-union organizing, targeted information and awareness campaigns, with a particular focus on youth;
- Engagement at third-level with student unions and student workers;
- General community campaigning.

It is envisaged that each working group will agree a set of aims and objectives, specific outcomes, targets and timelines with associated roles and responsibilities which will be

coordinated and communicated across the full project group by the Congress coordinator in conjunction with the Cork Council of Trade Unions' Officer Board on a regular basis.

(2) WORKERS' COLLEGE

The working group established by the Executive Council (EC) to plan the creation of a workers' college continued to explore how the plan approved by the EC might be realised.

Important work in a number of key areas was initiated. A comprehensive survey of the training capacity of affiliated unions was conducted. Research was also undertaken to build a register of tutors available to do work for the movement, along with details of their areas of expertise, experience and qualifications.

Work to develop an appropriate corporate structure for a college was conducted, including the production of a detailed Memorandum and Articles

of Association for a company under the control of Congress.

Work was also undertaken on developing a common approach to a new Quality Assurance procedure for certification, referred to elsewhere in this report, and on developing training capacity within the movement.

Working groups were set up in a number of key subject areas, including: Economics and Politics, Organising, Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity and Employment Law.

Part of the task of these groups was to identify what common ground already existed in the provisions of existing courses by affiliate unions.

It was clear to the working group that there was considerable merit in taking an incremental approach to the development of the college and a number of measures were proposed to this end. These included the development of a common curriculum outlining what training opportunities would be offered to students and the development of common materials and pedagogical approaches to support this. These initiatives are still process at the time of writing.

An interim name – Union College – along with a logo was adopted to facilitate the delivery of common courses as they were prepared and agreed.

Guidelines and procedures for the development of syllabi and supporting materials were adapted from a model developed by the European Trade Union Institute. In addition a range of administrative, financial, systemic and promotional measures were adopted. It is planned that a common programme, based on current training offered by affiliates, will be available to all unions, later in 2015.

There is no doubt that further work needs to be done in realising the full potential of the college as it was envisioned. Ultimately, the key objective is in providing a high-quality educational infrastructure to serve the needs of the movement.

CONGRESS MEMBERSHIP & AFFILIATIONS

Union Membership

The number of union members affiliated to Congress at the beginning of 2015 stood at 770,569 compared to 768,911 members in 2014; a net increase of 1,658, representing an increase of 0.2%, in the twelve month period. The figures include a gain year-on-year of 6,267 members registered across 13 unions and a reduction of 4,609 members across 22 unions.

Summary of Membership Changes 2014/2015

	2015	2014	Difference
NI	206,716	206,303	413
RoI	563,853	562,608	1,245
TOTAL	770,569	768,911	1,658

Female Membership

The total number of female members in 2015 is 412,122

Female Membership 2015/14 Differences:

	2015	2014	Difference
NI	121,126	119,417	413
RoI	290,996	283,229	1,245
TOTAL	412,122	402,646	1,658

Proportion of Female Membership

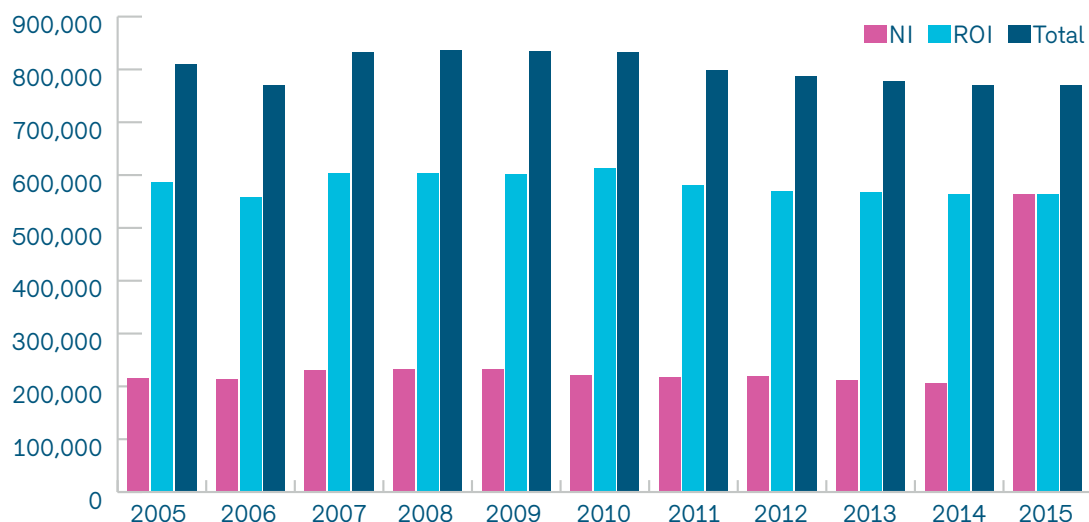
	%
NI	58%
RoI	50%
TOTAL	52%

Affiliated Unions

There are 47 unions affiliated to Congress for 2015, a reduction of just one union, ACCORD. This union is organised in Northern Ireland and took a decision to leave Congress at the beginning of 2014, citing cost as the reason.

The number of unions with Associate Membership status 2015 is six.

Fig 7: 10 Year Membership Overview



The following are the 47 unions affiliated to Congress in 2015:

UNIONS AFFILIATED TO CONGRESS 2015			
AHCPS	ESU	NASUWT	TSSA
AITM	FBU	NIPSA	TUI
ASTI	FDA	NUJ	UCATT
ATL	GMB	NURMTW	UCU
BECTU	GSU	OPATSI	UNISON
BATU	IBOA	PCS	UNITE THE UNION
BFAWU	IFUT	POA	USDAW
CPSU	IMO	POA NI	UTU
CSP	INMO	PROSPECT	VI
CWU	IMPACT	PSEU	VOA
CWU UK	INTO	SIPTU	
EQUITY	MANDATE	TEEU	

Density

The total number of employees in ROI at end of 2014 was 1,938,900 (QNHS Q4, 2014). Unions affiliated to Congress recorded membership of 770,569 at the beginning of 2015. Based on these figures the density rate for Congress affiliated membership is 39.74% (37% in 2013). (CHECK PERECNTGES XXXX)

Summary Financial Report

Congress finances have remained steady over the period 2013-2014, with a small surplus reported for both years. Both our main sources of income, affiliation fees and funding from the Department of Enterprise have experienced declines, although favourable exchange rates helped affiliation income in 2014.

Training projects funded by the Department of Social Protection, Solas and the Department of Communications have remained active throughout the period, accounting for much of the increased project income and training + education costs. In Northern Ireland funding from the Department of Employment + Learning has increased with more activity in the training and education area.

Congress expenditure has generally stayed consistent over the period with the exception of project related expenditure in the areas of training and travel. Conversely campaigning expenditure has

reduced in 2014, although the Global Solidarity and Youth Connect campaigns both remain very active.

Deficits on the combined Dublin and Belfast pension schemes remains at €1.25m. Measures have been taken in 2014 to address the increasing deficit on the Northern Ireland scheme

For a report on Congress Staffing see Appendix 4.

PART II

WORK OF CONGRESS COMMITTEES

Women's Committee

The Women's Committee is one of the longest standing formal committees of Congress and continues to provide an opportunity for women in the movement to meet and discuss issues through a gender lens. The committee was reconstituted in 2014 and the following were elected as Officers:

- Theresa Dwyer (CPSU), Chair;
- Margaret Coghlan (IMPACT), Vice Chair
- Melissa Brennan (PSEU), Secretary.



The major initiatives in the period under review were the organisation of a national conference in 2014 and a seminar in 2015. Under the theme Women Organising for Decent Work, over 200 delegates gathered in Wexford to debate 21 motions and hear from a number of guest speakers over the two days.

Congress President John Douglas opened the conference, noting that women make up the majority of trade union membership on the island of Ireland. He said the delegates represented nearly 400,000 working women on the island, a very considerable resource for the movement to have, one whose participation we need to improve if we are to fully realise our potential for realising change in Irish workplaces and across wider society.

Congress Assistant General Secretary Sally Anne Kinahan gave a brief presentation on the labour market and said that greater income inequality, higher levels of insecure work and the emergence of a 'two-tier' workforce posed a serious problem for women workers. This was followed by five women workers outlining their experiences of precarious work and unemployment. The women who spoke on this issue were: Margaret O'Dwyer, MANDATE; Laura McKenna, SIPTU; Marion Jackson, IMPACT; Janet Orr, UNISON; Jackie McNeill, USDAW

Pamela Dooley introduced the section on Women & Trade Unions, including the results of our 2013 Equality Audit.



Ann Henderson, Assistant Secretary, Scottish TUC also spoke on the importance of investment in childcare.

Grainne Healy of Marriage Equality addressed conference and urging the trade union movement to be strong advocates in the then upcoming marriage equality referendum in the Republic of Ireland, which was supported by conference.

The March 2015 Women's Seminar - Women's Views, Women's Voices - saw 150 delegates from across the island gather in Belfast in the week of International Women's Day. In one of his final public appearances as General Secretary, David Begg, said that 'a new model' of social investment was needed to combat the dramatic inequality that has resulted from the 'demand of the markets' that working people should bear the brunt of the ongoing crisis.

The 'feminisation of the labour market' required different kinds of risks to be taken on board, as family formation and caring needs were different.

He said these had to be provided for if people were to participate in the labour market and achieve their full potential. Referring to International Women's Day (March 8), Mr Begg said:

"That is what I always wanted – for women to be equal in a way that gives every person the opportunity to be fulfilled, to have children and

yet have the freedom to obtain your own dreams, whatever they might be.”

The seminar was also attended by then incoming General Secretary, Patricia King, the first female to take up that role.

In support of the President of Ireland’s Ethics Initiative Congress set up a project to explore the role of ethics in the workplace and many delegates at the seminar took part in filming for the initiative.

A charity fundraising appeal in aid of the NI Hospice was held in memory of our former colleague, Karen Sims, (former NI Organiser for NASUWT, a member of Congress Women’s Committee and also the Northern Ireland Committee). Karen passed away in September 2014 and is sadly missed by all NASUWT members, the Women’s Committee and the wider trade union movement. Colleagues also marked the passing of our former colleague, Ann Casey, who died after a long illness, the same week of the seminar.

Members of the Committee also participated in the Women’s Council of the Isles meetings in 2013 (Dublin) and 2014 (London). The Committee was especially pleased to host the 2013 event to mark the centenary of the Dublin 1913 Lockout. Presentations on a range of topics were given and discussed by the five trade union centres represented.

Delegates also heard from Padraig Yates from the 1913 Committee about the 1913 Dublin Lockout Centenary Exhibition, while Katie O Kelly performed her acclaimed one woman show Counter Culture for delegates.

Concluding the meeting, women representatives of the four trade union centres called on the UK Government to deliver its obligations as signatory to the Good Friday Agreement and bring forward a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Other areas of activity included:

- Statement issued in support of passing Protection of Life During Pregnancy Bill;

- Submission on the issue of Domestic Violence to the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence & Equality;

- Maire Mulcahy, then Chair of Women’s Committee addressed the biennial delegate conference in Belfast July 2013;

- The Committee supported the 16 Days of Action campaign to end Violence against Women;

- In tandem with the TUC, STUC and WTUC, we launched an online survey on people’s experience of domestic violence and its impact in the workplace.

- Co-hosted with Ruhama in May 2014 an event entitled: The Unchosen Roadshow: Human Trafficking Short Film Competition, which showcased three short films on human trafficking;

- Continued support for the Turn Off the Red Light Campaign and especially the publication of the General Scheme of the Sexual Offences Bill, and particularly its provisions to criminalise the purchase of sex and ongoing work to ensure that the Heads of the Bill are turned into legislation and swiftly enacted;

- Welcomed the July 2014 announcement on the ratification of the ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers as “a major advance for domestic workers and their right to decent work”

- Jointly, with the National Women’s Council, wrote to all of our MEPs urging them to support the revision of the proposed Maternity Leave or Pregnant Workers Directive.

- Continued to highlight the disproportionate impact of the recession on women;

- Lobbied the Minister for Justice on seeking exclusion of renowned promoter of sexual violence, Julian Blanc, from Ireland;

- Completion of annual ETUC March 8 survey on gender mainstreaming within trade unions;

- Engagement with the Equality audit of affiliates.

More info at: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/gender.html>

Retired Workers Committee

At the September, 2013 meeting of the Retired Workers' Committee the following were elected: Chair, Michael Duffy (IMPACT); Vice Chair, Jim Nealon, (IMPACT); Treasurer, Marie Doyle, (ASTI); Secretary/Co-ordinator, Michael O'Halloran (UNION – CHK?); FERPA delegate, Des Sheridan, (IBOA).

The Committee held 22 meetings in the period under review, which included four sub-Committee meetings. The Committee dealt with a range of issues, during this time, including:

The removal of the **telephone allowance** from the household benefits package and the serious impact this had on low income pensioners, particularly those in rural communities.

Lower income pensioners were also affected by the abolition of the **funeral grant** and the introduction of **prescription charges** for medical card holders, initially at €1 per prescription item but later increased to €2.50 per item.

There was also a reduction in the eligibility rules for **medical cards** for those over 70.

The retention of the **Pension Levy**.

These reductions and charges had a serious impact on the disposable income of pensioners.

The Committee discussed the need to improve the lobbying skills of pensioner representatives throughout Ireland, leading to the organisation of a workshop with the help of Older & Bolder to assist the Committee in developing lobbying skills.

A sub-Committee was established to look at developing a strategy for lobbying. Three key factors emerged from the work of this Committee:

- The recruitment and training of volunteer lobbyists;
- Provision of resources for administration and organisational needs;

- Provision of information on issues so lobbying can be effectively carried out.

The Committee made Budget Submissions for Budget 2014 and Budget 2015. The issues dealt with in these submissions included:

- Restoration of the Christmas Bonus;
- Abolition of the Telephone Allowance;
- Reduction in the Electricity Allowance;
- Abolition of the Funeral Benefit;
- Introduction of prescription charges;
- Introduction of Property Tax;
- Introduction of Water Charges;
- Increase in DIRT Tax;
- Eligibility limit for the medical card;
- Implication of tax reductions on the state's ability to improve and maintain public services;
- Level of contributory and non-contributory pensions;
- Rural Transport.

The Committee also considered an anomaly in certain Local Authority Pension Schemes and other state employees with a benefit for surviving widows, when it was required for state employees to agree to join the scheme with a provision for surviving spouses.

Many opted out of this provision and this left surviving spouses with inadequate provision for themselves and, in some cases, children. The Committee invited a representative of unions concerned to a meeting to see what action could be taken. The union representatives and a representative from the Retired Workers Committee attended a meeting in the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform on the issue. However, a letter from the Department indicated their unwillingness to deal with this problem. While the Department's position may be technically correct, there are still

moral issues concerning the plight of surviving spouses that needs to be dealt with.

The Committee also participated in a protest rally at Dail Eireann. The rally was organised by the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament. In addition, the Secretary/Co-ordinator produced sample letters which could be used when lobbying TD's and Ministers on Budget issues.

There were a number of joint meetings held with the **Northern Ireland Retired Workers Committee** to discuss matters of mutual interest. They undertook an exercise to evaluate pensioner's situations North and South and to discuss the implementation of the Motion adopted at the 2013 Congress Biennial Delegates Conference.

Implementation of Motion 8 on the Status of Retired Members in the Trade Union movement

Jack O'Connor addressed the committee meeting in Liberty Hall in November, 2013 and gave a stimulating talk on the trade union movement in Ireland and the forces that are now at work to undermine its position. He emphasised that there was never a greater need for trade union unity at this time and for the development of new strategies and methods to pursue the interests of workers by trade union organisations.

The Executive Committee established a Working Group to review the implementation of the Motion adopted at the 2013 BDC. The Working Group was chaired by Joe O'Flynn, General Secretary, SIPTU and Treasurer of Congress. Fergus Whelan, Industrial Officer, was delegated by the General Secretary to service the committee. The ordinary members were made up of members of the Retired Workers Committee, North and South. The work of the committee will be circulated.

The committee very much regretted the closure of the Older & Bolder organisation when its funding was withdrawn by Atlantic Philanthropies, as it had made a major contribution to helping older peoples' organisations become more effective in their work and played a valuable role in lobbying government on behalf of older people.

Michael O'Halloran retired as Secretary/Co-ordinator of the Retired Workers Committee in February, 2015 after 23 years association with the committee.

FERPA: European Federation of Retired & Older People

The Retired Workers Committee is affiliated to FERPA which is part of the European Trades Union Confederation and which holds meetings every six months which are attended by delegates from each member country. During the past two years Des Sheridan has attended these meetings and conveyed the views of the Congress Retired Workers Committee to FERPA and reported back in detail, after each meeting. These reports are available to the BDC 2015 through Congress.

The main work of FERPA during the past two years has been to equalise pensions and welfare benefits throughout Europe, as these have been attacked in some EU member states resulting in greater levels of poverty for older people particularly in Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain.

Ireland has not been affected to the same degree but remains as a target for some member states owing to the fact that many of our welfare benefits have been maintained by the present government. The Free Travel Scheme is the envy of many EU countries and is one just two such schemes in the EU.

Health & Safety Committee

The Health & Safety Committee meets to discuss and identify ways in which unions can work together to promote healthy and safety concerns in the workplace and, thereby, help create safer workplaces. The committee met regularly during the period under review. Underpinning its work is the understanding that union organisation is the most effective tool for ensuring good health and safety at work. It is a verifiable fact that organised workplaces are safer workplaces.

(i) Safety Representatives Manual

There were a number of issues arising for the committee during the period, during the course of which a strategic review was conducted. Of particular concern was the apparent decline in



safety representatives in a number of sectors. As part of a longer-term strategy to address this, work commenced on the development of a new resource for safety reps. It is intended that the resource will be a major reference tool for safety reps but will also become an important text for training purposes. Agreement was reached with the HSA to fund the publication while the British TUC offered their assistance in making their Hazards publication available as a model.

Mr Herbert Mulligan of Health & Safety Review was appointed as editor while a cross-committee editorial group, representing education & training and health & safety, was set up consisting of Sylvester Cronin of SIPTU, Marian Geoghegan of IBOA, Sean Heading of TEEU and Frank Vaughan of Congress. The publication will be launched at an event marking Workers' Memorial Day in 2015. The editorial group has also worked on a separate but complementary publication, to be written by Francis Devine, which will guide unions on how health & safety must be addressed as a trade union issue.

(ii) Mental Health

It is also clear that mental health in the workplace and stress at work are major issues for unions. The often related issues of bullying and violence in the workplace are also of great concern. As part of the European Week for Safety & Health at Work, Congress organised a seminar in October 2014 - with the support of the Health & Safety Authority

- to raise awareness among trade union officials and activists of the issues arising from mental health. In addition, this help us to begin mapping the supports, training and guidelines that trade unions need to put in place to support members and activists who experience these issues. The seminar was well attended and positively received. It was an important step in clarifying training and supports that unions feel they need in this area and which will be further developed in the course of 2015.

Community Sector Committee

The Congress Community Sector committee is comprised of 20 representatives, including activists and officials, nominated by SIPTU, IMPACT and UNITE. During 2013/2014 the Committee was chaired by David Connolly (SIPTU) and Fergus Whelan acted as Convenor.

Bi-monthly meetings were held by video-link to facilitate members in Waterford, Cork, Kerry and Galway. A high level of coordination was achieved between the three unions on specific issues and the Committee provided an effective forum to agree joint responses to problems that arose. The main challenges encountered during this period were the continued severe government cuts in funding allocations to the Community and Voluntary sector, the continued restructuring experienced in programmes and the introduction of procurement and privatisation.

The main issues addressed during the period included changes to Labour market programmes, such as Community Employment, Job Initiative (CHK), the Rural Social Scheme and TUS.

These covered working conditions and pension entitlements; policy changes in relation to adult education and community training initiatives and centres; the decision to tender for the new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme; the decision to privatise the delivery of the new national employment service through the JobPath programme and the impact of continued funding cuts in annual budgets. The unions involved responded to these changes through joint action, meeting with senior officials in the government departments involved, lobbying the political system and proposing alternative policies and approaches.

The committee was also involved in the Congress submission in relation to Collective Bargaining legislation. A community workers assembly was convened by the three unions in October 2013, with the purpose of consulting with union members in relation to priorities for the sector.

In December 2012 the unions had secured a significant labour Court recommendation for the community and voluntary sector. This determined for the first time that government departments and agencies, as de-facto decision makers in matters of policy and funding, should engage directly and fully with the employer and unions in a tripartite forum.

The committee has agreed strategic priorities for implementation in 2015 and beyond. The immediate priority is to secure the establishment of a formal negotiating structure for the community and voluntary sector through negotiation with government, in the context of a national agreement. It was also decided to engage fully with the Congress internal structures and the Executive Council to promote the role of the sector and to improve liaison and cooperation with both public and private sectors.

More effective external alliances will also be developed on key issues such as procurement and privatisation, the Living wage and collective bargaining. The Committee also intends to develop new initiatives and approaches for public investment and activities delivered by workers in the community

and voluntary sector, through political engagement aimed at shaping policy for the next government.

Youth Committee

The Congress Youth Committee enjoyed a renewal of activity since its reconstitution in May of 2013. Throughout the subsequent two years the committee sought to critically engage with issues facing young workers both within and without the workplace.

The challenges facing young workers are many and varied. At a workplace level, a two-tier system has emerged in terms of pay and conditions, which represents a clear inequity that must be challenged. In respect of this, the Youth Committee notes and commends the robust efforts being made by affiliates to address these issues in their respective sectors.

At an economic level, the past seven years has seen an unprecedented attack on young workers. A protracted unemployment crisis has facilitated the proliferation of unpaid work schemes contributing to a devaluation of work, and more importantly, those who perform that work.

In many sectors, paid entry-level jobs have increasingly been supplanted by unpaid JobBridge type internships, something that we as a committee vehemently oppose and continue to protest against. Where employment is secured it is often characterised by low pay, is non-union and is precarious in its nature.

But precarious employment is just one aspect of a young workers existence. The commodification of almost every aspect of human need in our society has led to spiraling costs in accommodation, healthcare, and education, all contributing to the experience of precarity among young workers. This has been further compounded by cuts to social welfare payments for those aged 25 and under.

In response, the committee launched the Rights Campaign in 2014, which outlined five basic rights for young workers in Ireland. It was hoped that by adopting a rights based approach to such issues our campaign would help raise the consciousness of young workers by providing a clear focus and target for agitation and mobilisation.



With this in mind, the primary focus of our campaign is to achieve the reversal of the cuts to young workers Jobseekers Allowance payments. Having secured the support of numerous civil society groups the committee is embarking upon a political lobbying campaign in anticipation of the next Budget and the General Election.

The need to foster and develop links with other progressive groups in society is strongly felt by the committee. In this regard we have worked in tandem with other youth groups on matters of mutual concern, opening up clear lines of communication between young trade unionists, students, unemployed and youth activists.

The Youth Committee pledged support to the Repeal the Eight Amendment Campaign and that to secure the release of imprisoned Dublin teenager, Ibrahim Halawa, held by authorities in Egypt.

The need to engage more effectively with our existing young members is critical if we are to flourish as a movement.

This important process has begun in earnest and is evidenced by the collaborative efforts of both committees - north and south - in organising the Congress Youth Conference, which took place in November 2013. In addition, the Youth Committee aims to establish a vibrant youth blog, generating healthy democratic and comradely debate on a variety of topics relating to youth affairs.

This spirit of democratic debate has been a defining feature of the outgoing committee, with few decisions made without strong participatory debate and discussion. This is a testament to the passion of the members of our committee and their desire to positively influence the direction of our movement into the future.

In March 2015, affiliates were invited to make nominations to the Youth Committee and to officer positions for the new term (2015-2017) and the inaugural meeting of the new Committee is scheduled for May 11, 2015.

It is envisaged that at this meeting the Committee will agree its work programme for the coming term, complete with key priority outcomes and actions.

The incoming officers of the Committee will take up their positions at this meeting.

Disability Committee

The Congress Disability Committee, chaired by Claire Mahon (INMO) with vice Chair Mary (UNITE), continues to meet on a regular basis.

The importance of our work is illustrated by the fact that people with a disability are substantially less likely to be active in the labour market and are more likely to experience discrimination. In 2010, working-age people with a disability were less than half as likely to be active in the labour



market (36% compared to 77% of other adults) and had a considerably higher unemployment rate (22% compared to 16% of other adults) than those without a disability, according to a report published in January 2013 by the ESRI and the Equality Authority.

It is our continuing view that the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the best mechanism to eliminate discrimination and exclusion and we urge the Irish government to urgently speed up the process of ratification.

In seeking to deliver ongoing disability training through its general education and training provision, Congress has drafted a proposal for the validation of a Disability Champions course. The overall aims of the programme are to enable learners to attain the skills, knowledge and confidence to represent/support people with disabilities in their workplace or union

We continue to engage with the National Disability Authority (NDA), in particular its work on employment. Deirdre O'Connor (INTO) former Chair of this Committee) is now on the NDA board.

We have had a series of meetings with the NDA regarding possible trade union actions for the long awaited Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

Unfortunately, the publication of the strategy has been delayed once again but we are hopeful that it will be published in advance of the BDC 2015.

We continue to cooperate and promote the NDA role under Part IV of the Disability Act (2005). For the third successive year, the 2013 report by the NDA showed that the proportion of staff with disabilities reported for the public service for 2013 exceeded the 3% target set out in the Disability Act 2005. The number of recorded employees with disabilities for 2013 is 6,464, down 147 from 6,611 in 2012. The overall number of employees in the public sector for 2013 is 192,575, down 5,013 from 197,588 in 2012.

As the economic environment improves, the importance of proactive planning around future recruitment of people with disabilities increases. Given the statutory disability employment target, they have advised that such proactive planning should to be a key issue for the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, which has overall responsibility for public sector numbers. They have also stated that individual public bodies, particularly commercial bodies with autonomy over their staffing levels and recruitment should improve their focus on this area.

The major events and initiatives during the period included the holding of national seminars in October 2013 and 2014 where union delegates, along with representatives from disability groups, gathered to consider the impact of the economic crisis on people

with disabilities and how they can build alliances to fight back.

In 2013 the theme was Decent Work for People with Disabilities. John Douglas, Congress President said that the seminar was an important event to ensure that the voices of all of our members be heard, including people with disabilities. He added that we need a threshold of decency to guide us through the economic crisis and said that the trade union movement joined with disability groups north and south campaigning against cuts to disability services. We need a change of course north and South - including a raft of growth and job friendly measures - if we are to pull our economies and societies out of the mire.

Margaret Haddock, Deputy Chief Executive of the Orchardville Society and President of the European Union of Supported Employment gave the keynote address and delegates from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland discussed issues pertinent to their jurisdictions in workshops.

The National Disability Authority (NDA) has been asked by Minister Kathleen Lynch to assist in the development of a 10 year comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities, as per the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan. Presentation and discussion on what the strategy might look like and the role trade unions might play was led by Marion Wilkinson, project manager for the comprehensive employment strategy (NDA) and Christy Lynch.

Les Allamby, Director of the Law Centre NI outlined how proposed welfare reform legislation will impact on people with Disabilities. A report recently published by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action tells us that reforms to the welfare system will take an estimated £750 million out of the Northern Ireland economy. Put bluntly, that's £650 a year less in the pockets of every adult of working age.

Nikki Hegarty and Grainne De Paor spoke about good practice examples of the employment of people with disabilities. Claire Bruton - practicing barrister with a particular interest in employment law - presented on the UN Convention for People with Disabilities and the implications for employment law. Kevin Doherty, CEO Disability Action, spoke of

his organisation's workplace and training support in Northern Ireland.

Delegates also received a progress report on the Congress Training Options project.

The theme for the 2014 Seminar was the contribution that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities can make to the lives of people on the island of Ireland. Deputy Mayor of Derry, Alderman Gary Middleton and David Begg, General Secretary Congress opened the event. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - from rhetoric to practical implementation - was presented by Charlotte May-Simera, Research Assistant, Centre for Disability Law and Policy, NUIG. Simon McClenahan, from Disability Action also spoke.

Terry Park from the the Department for Employment & Learning spoke on strategies for getting disabled people into work and. Parallel workshop sessions were also held including: Case Study on Inclusive Employment - (Queens University Belfast) and The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disability (Marion Wilkinson, National Disability Authority). Peter Purton from the TUC spoke about Disabled people and the fight against austerity and Sean McGovern, Chair of TUC Disability Committee spoke on the theme of people with disabilities fighting back.

Sylvia Ryan from Congress updated delegates on the Congress activation programme and showed a video of the project's work.

Finally, the Committee was greatly saddened to hear of the deaths of committee members Patricia Brennan (UNITE) and Dave Parr, the originator of the Disability Champions idea which has now spread far and wide.

Trades Councils (RoI)

There are 20 Trades Councils affiliated to Congress in the Republic of Ireland. Trades Councils endeavour to be the voice and the presence of trade unions at the local level. Most Trades Councils have a track record of hard work on behalf of the communities but it is possible only to give a brief overview in this report.

Many Trades Councils are involved in running Congress centres. The activities of the Congress Centres Network are documented elsewhere in this report. Trades Council nominate representatives to Partnership and Development Boards

The main activity of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions (DCTU) in the period under review was its monthly delegate meetings. It continued to fulfil its historic role as a Parliament of Labour in Dublin.

It was addressed by prominent speakers from the trade union movement and community organisations.

Such subjects as:

- Housing,
- Area based partnerships,
- TAIP,
- new technology and jobs,
- Industrial relations legislation,
- Industrial disputes including Greyhound, Dunne's Stores, Dublin Bus were discussed.

Public activity included organising the annual May Day march, a pre- budget Dail picket and participation in all the anti- water charges demonstrations.

The Waterford Council of Trade Unions (WCTU) was involved in a 9 week sit-in at the Park Inn Bar in support of the workers resulting in a number of jobs being saved and some compensation paid.

As all city bus services in Waterford are proposed to be privatised WCTU continue to actively support the campaign against privatization.

The Council held a Solidarity event outside the entrance to the Waterford city square shopping centre on the Saturday before the Dunne's workers held a day's stoppage on April 2nd

The Council has actively supported:

- Right2Water.

- An ongoing campaign seeking to secure a hundred bed community nursing home to cater for elderly.

- The campaign to defend the Peoples Wood at Dunmore East.

- The Pylon issue as it effects the South East corridor.

- The Direct Provision issue, supporting residents at locations in Waterford City and Tramore.

- The campaign opposing the vilification of the Roma community in Waterford.

- The campaign for a University for the South/ East.

WCTU holds an annual event in conjunction with the Imagine Festival every October that is now running into its sixth year. The event covers a wide range of social and Labour History.

The Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU) lent it support to a number of union / solidarity protests in Cork over the past couple of years but the primary focus of the CCTU over the past year has been the Congress/ CCTU Pilot Project. Ms Sally Anne Kinahan and Joe O'Flynn delivered a presentation to the CCTU AGM in 2014 outlining the vision of a project in Cork. The CCTU overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal and embarked on the pilot project, immediately. A number of multi union meetings have taken place over the past 12 months. A successful seminar for trade union activists was held in UCC in January 2015 and this assisted greatly in communicating the objective of the project and particularly assisted in involving the participation of committed union activists throughout the county.

The project will begin to take real shape over the coming months as the work programme is developed and the CCTU remain very committed to the objective.

Limerick Council of Trade Unions (LCTU) has continued with its busy program of activity.

- LCTU has a dedicated welfare rights officer who offers assistance at social welfare appeals.

- LCTU has assisted workers in the occupation of their workplaces in both the Ivan's store in Caherdavin Limerick and at the HMV stores in Limerick during 2013 and 2014.
- The Council recently re-launched the Trades Councils newspaper "The Bottom Dog" and set up a Facebook page and twitter account to compliment the publication.
- In November 2013 LCTU set up the Limerick International Brigades Memorial Trust in order to promote awareness of the six Limerick men who fought with the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War.
- The Council promoted a public subscription to raise the funds necessary to erect a very beautiful artistically designed memorial which was unveiled in the gardens of Limerick City Hall.

Talks and Workshops organised at the Mechanics Institute from May 2013

An on-going collaboration between the LCTU and scholar-activists from the University of Limerick began in the summer of 2013. Several workshops and seminars were held and the following issues were included:

- A dialogue among rank-and-file trade unionists and others interested in playing a role in rebuilding the movement.
- Conor McCabe on 'Who Benefits from Austerity'.
- A Six-point Alternative to Austerity on a beermat' by Terrence McDonagh.
- JLC's and key developments in industrial relations by Michelle O'Sullivan UL.
- Trade union recognition by Tom Turner UL.
- John Lannon of Shannonwatch on Irish neutrality and the use of Shannon by the US Army.
- Zoe Lawlor on the deteriorating conditions in Palestine.
- Two seminars on journalism skills by Nick Rabbits, Journalist

- A talk by Margareta D'Arcy on the anti-war movement, direct action and her imprisonment.
- A talk by Randa Wahbe – of the Palestinian Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association.
- A weekend school on political economy by Stevie Nolan and Mel Corry of Trademark Belfast.
- Talk on 'Bonds, Balance Sheets & Irish Water' by Connor McCabe.
- Limerick Labour History Conference, speakers included, Mick O'Dwyer, Niall Greene, Barry Desmond, Ruth Guiry, John McGrath, Dominic Haugh, Charlie Callan and Mike McNamara.
- Discussion on neutrality and militarism in Ireland and Costa Rica with human rights lawyer Roberto Zamora.

Limerick Council of Trade Unions, in collaboration with Frameworks Films Cork has produced a film documentary on the Limerick Soviet. The documentary which will be dedicated to the late Bro. Frank Prendergast and will be screened in Limerick on Mayday 2015.

Image to be placed here

PART III

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

On a number of occasions since BDC 2013 there has been speculation about whether the government might propose a return to Social Partnership in some form. Nothing has come of this to date.

‘Social Dialogue’ is the phrase which originated with Jacques Delors’ efforts to create a counterpoint to the liberal orientation of the 1986 Single European Act. The difference between it and Social Partnership is mainly one of semantics. That there is an institutional deficit undermining Ireland’s capacity to deal with the type of challenges outlined below is increasingly being accepted, even by those philosophically opposed to Social Partnership. The best way to move forward on this may be to start addressing that institutional deficit.

- Ireland has transitioned into a post-recovery phase but there are many challenges to confront, which will require choices and trade-offs between competing interests thereby posing dilemmas for policy makers. Included are the following:
- Ireland carries a huge overhang of public debt which will leave the country vulnerable to external shocks and continue to constrain fiscal freedom for many years, limiting the space for social progress. It will be difficult to respond adequately to public aspirations in areas like housing, childcare etc.
- While a less acute problem than in most of Europe ageing of the population, will result in higher levels of chronic illness and care needs. This will impose a relentless pressure on the health budget and probably create new intergenerational cleavages in society because the economically active cohort of the population may resent the additional cost of sustaining the retired generation.
- In recent years there has been a significant shift in the distribution of income inside many

economies, including high-income countries, from wages to profits and, within wages, from those at the middle and bottom towards the top, partly due to globalisation, partly due to financial liberalisation, partly due to technology, and partly due to changes in social norms, particularly corporate governance (share options for senior executives etc.). The consequence of this is increasing inequality in society, a trend from which Ireland is not immune. Ultimately this may give rise to a higher level of distributional contestation than we have experienced in the past.

- Ultimately a resolution of the Eurozone crisis will lead to deeper integration. Each country will be expected to follow a similar trajectory of competitiveness, inflation and wage levels. The first obvious problem that arises is that there are no institutions to achieve this objective in the absence of Social Partnership. The second is that wages in other countries will be set in a social market economy context while Irish workers have no means of progressing their ‘social wage’. It is likely that unions will default to a pay maximisation approach influenced by pay movements in the sectors of the economy where skills are in short supply.
- The pension crisis will become more acute as the population ages and funding gaps begin to manifest themselves. The interface of social protection and labour markets will be a critical one for government, employers and unions. How, for instance, will the welfare system migrate to a mandatory second tier pension contribution? How will the gap between retirement and eligibility for the Old Age Pension be managed?
- The transition from an industrial to a services economy, in the shadow of accelerating economic internationalisation, and secular stagnation, imposes pressures on the welfare state to achieve budgetary restraint, earnings equality and job growth. It is likely that labour markets will be increasingly polarised between highly-skilled well-paid jobs and low paid precarious jobs. These are long run secular trends unrelated to recession which require a highly sophisticated and costly response of social investment and the tax base to sustain it.

- The eventual transition to a low carbon economy will compound the foregoing and involve critical choices (e.g. between developing the agri-food industry and reducing emissions).

It is very difficult for governments to resolve these dilemmas without some understanding and buy-in from the public at large. As things stand, the outlook is not promising. There seems to be a complete disconnect in the public mind between tax and social provision.

The furore over water charges might be the precursor of a bigger social rebellion, especially now that populism is in the ascendant all over Europe. And what have we done? We have progressively dismantled the only institutional mechanism we had for achieving consensus.

At the same time we clearly need a new distributional settlement for the medium term.

The key advantage of Social Partnership is that it took care of distributional issues allowing government to focus on growing the economy.

The most obvious institutional deficit relates to a forum where employers, unions and government can address labour market issues. During the Social Partnership years the forum was the National Implementation Body (NIB) which was used to oversee the operation of agreements and to identify channels through which disputes could be resolved, usually the LRC or the Labour Court. A similar type body existed in the 1970s and 1980s known as the Employer-Labour Conference. It was chaired by Prof Basil Chubb and had Joint Secretaries in the Director General of Irish Business Employers' Confederation and General Secretary of Congress.

Public discourse on Social Partnership is woefully ill-informed. Some of this is ideological hostility from those who resent any form of interference in free markets. They have deliberately conflated Social Partnership with the 2008 economic collapse without any credible evidence, particularly since that collapse originated in the private banking sector.

That ignorance is not really justified because there is now a reasonable literature available to those willing to make the effort to properly research the topic.

It is also the case that seven years of austerity has eroded social solidarity in Ireland, which is the essential cement needed to bind people in any common endeavour.

Institutional knowledge of how to make partnership work is also depleted. Nor should the damage to confidence in the project caused by the withdrawal of government and employers in 2009 be underestimated. Social dialogue is about a particular approach to achieving social and economic progress. It cannot be turned on and off like a tap.

Ultimately, it comes down to one question: is there any viable alternative to social dialogue of some form in a small open economy in a more deeply integrated Eurozone?

NESC

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) advise the Taoiseach on strategic policy issues relating to sustainable social, economic, and environmental development in Ireland. The membership of the Council is comprised of the representatives of trade unions, business and employer organisations, agricultural sector and farming organisations, representatives from the community and voluntary sector and representatives of environmental organisations.

In addition, membership of NESC is also made up of the heads of government departments and independent experts.

The current Congress nominees are: Patricia King, Sallyanne Kinahan, Shay Cody and Manus O'Riordan.

NESC has a history of producing reports with strategic, long-term analyses of key economic and social development issues affecting Ireland. Its early work focused on the economy, taxation, population and emigration and agricultural policy. It has also produced reports over the years on employment, housing and education, social policy, Ireland in the EU, public services and well-being.

The NESC Council meets on a monthly basis and meetings are chaired by the Secretary General of the Department of the Taoiseach. At each meeting the Council discusses reports drafted by NESC staff.

The work programme of NESC is decided on a three-year basis, by the Council.

In the period under review, NESC publications include studies on Ireland's five year crisis, environmental data, social housing, jobless households, wind energy, home ownership and rental. Copies of these reports are available to download at: <http://www.nesc.ie/>

PART IV

EDUCATION & TRAINING

This has been a time of significant transition for trade union education and training. The economic environment has continued to have a strong negative impact on training, particularly with difficulties in getting release for training participants. This has required innovative and flexible responses from unions.

The accreditation and certification landscape also experienced considerable change. Older qualifications have been moving into a new Common Awards System which has required unions offering accredited training to develop new programmes for validation.

Delays in processing such programmes have also presented serious challenges to delivery of training in these areas. Proposals to develop an integrated union college have also been advanced during the period with a considerable amount of additional development work being undertaken by a number of committed unions.

Congress Centres Network

The Congress Centres Network was established in 1985 in partnership with FÁS, as a trade union response to the unemployment crisis. Assisting the unemployed and soon-to-be unemployed workers in the areas of career-change training, job-search and

enterprise opportunities has been our main concern for 30 years, through a network of 23 nationwide.

Centres are in a unique position to create and maintain a strong and effective network that works towards a common vision, of providing comprehensive and strategic labour activation programmes, supports to the unemployed and a lifeline for those locked out of the labour market.

The Central Coordination team offers representation, support, and training to Boards of Management responsible for the Congress Centres nationwide. The Coordination team advocates for the rights of the unemployed and marginalised in our society.

The network has secured support under the 'Momentum' Programme 'which is part of the government's Action Plan for Jobs Programme and is administered by SOLAS. The users range in age from 19-65 and a third of all participants will be under 25.

This programme is a mechanism to ensure participants are kept as close as possible to the labour market and given a lifeline while unemployed. The objective of the programme is to progress trainees into work and there is a commitment to place a minimum of 30% of all trainees.

All trainees take part in certified education for 17 weeks, followed by a placement with an employer for 6-10 weeks. This training includes a talk from a union official on the benefits of joining a union.

The first contract issued in 2012 for 40 participants (all under 25yrs) in Drogheda, Dundalk and Finglas. Some 42% of trainees progressed into employment and education with the intensive support from the Congress Centres.

The second phase saw contracts signed in early September 2014, to the value of €1.1 million.

Locations agreed for delivery are Mullingar, Athlone, Longford, Athy, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Finglas, Drogheda, Dundalk, Dublin 12 and Roscommon. The 297 learners will have the opportunity to complete four FETAC Level 5 modules to include; Customer Service, Business Computing, Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace and Work Experience.

This programme will end in April 2016.

The Congress network was selected to offer training and support to people with disabilities through the Disability Activation Project (DACT). Congress plans to deliver education and training to enhance the competencies of 390 people with disabilities in a range of Personal Development, Information Technology, Mindfulness and work-related programmes.

This Project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Department of Social Protection and is targeted at the Border, Midlands and Western region. The programme is on track to reach all targets.

Training Programmes

(i) The Momentum Programme

This is supported by Labour Market Education and Training Fund (LMETF) which is part of the government's Action Plan for Jobs Programme and is administered by SOLAS.

This initiative is funded by European Social Fund/ European Structural Funds 2014-2020. Learners range in age from 19-65. A third of all participants will be under 25 and this programme is a mechanism to ensure young people are kept as close as possible to the labour market and given a lifeline while unemployed. The objective of the programme is to progress trainees into work and there is a commitment to 'place' a minimum of 30% of all trainees.

All trainees take part in certified education for 17 weeks, followed by a traineeship with an employer for 6-10 weeks. The training includes a talk from a union official on the benefits of union membership.

The first contract issued in 2012 and involved 40 participants, all under 25 years of age and based in three locations: Drogheda, Dundalk and Finglas. Some 42% of these trainees progressed into employment and education, with support from the Congress Centres. Some parents communicated their gratitude to Congress as this course proved life changing for their families.

The second phase saw contracts signed in September 2014, to the value €1.1m.

The locations agreed for delivery are: Mullingar, Athlone, Longford, Athy, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Finglas, Drogheda, Dundalk, Dublin 12 and Roscommon. The 297 learners involved will have the opportunity to complete four FETAC Level 5 modules to include:

- Customer Service;
- Business Computing;
- Personal Effectiveness in the Workplace;
- Work Experience.

They will also receive training in forklift skills, Safe Pass and Manual Handling. As part of the programme, Congress Centres have engaged with 78 employers that will offer quality work placements. The programme concludes in April 2016.

(ii) Training Options (DACT)

Congress was selected to offer training and support to people with disabilities. The Disability Activation Project (DACT) aims to increase the capacity and potential of people on disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market. Congress plans to deliver education and training to enhance the competencies of 390 people with disabilities in a range of Personal Development, Information Technology, Mindfulness and work-related programmes. We hope to have 40 disability champions trained and located in eight of our Congress Centres.

The project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and is targeted at the Border, Midlands and Western region (BMW). The target group is people with a disability, aged 16 to 65 years of age and in receipt of disability/illness welfare payments and who reside in the BMW region. Local employers were invited to participate and offer traineeships. Grants and wage subsidies were promoted by the CCN to local employers. Union officials were informed of the programme and encouraged to disseminate the information to their members out of work sick.

To be eligible for the (DACT) Training Options programme, participants/applicants had to be in receipt of one of the following welfare payments:

■ Disability Allowance

■ Invalidity Pension

■ Illness Benefit

■ Blind Pension

■ Disability Benefit

■ Incapacity Supplement

■ Injury Benefit

The 12 week programme which will include achieving three (3) FETAC accredited certificates and progression courses available in the Congress Centres Network, along with 10 days practical work experience in local employer premises.

An Individual Employment Plan helps to determine next steps in education and training, when the course has concluded. On the job Support and Coaching was offered along with follow up Support and Mentoring from persons who have experienced disability in their lives.

In addition, assistance was provided with workplace integration, transport and childcare budget.

Benefits to Employer

Range of supports for Employers include:

Database of skilled jobseekers

Access to a committed workforce

Grants and Financial Supports Available include:

Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)

Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant (WEAG)

Job Interview – Interpreter Grant (JIIG)

Personal Reader Grant (PRG)

Employee Retention Grant Scheme (ERGS)

The programme is on track to reach all targets set: to date, 390 participants trained, 340 progressed into jobs or education and training, 40 disability champions in CCN centres and engaging with up to 100 employers. Congress recommends that this peer-to-peer model of rehabilitative programme be mainstreamed nationally to provide supports to people that find themselves out of work and locked out of the labour market.

(iii) Benefit 4 Computer Training.

Benefit 4 computer training is for people who have no experience or have not used a computer over the last 12 months.

To date, we have put 1700 people through this 8 hour training programme.

During this one day session, participants learn basic computer skills including; send/receive email, use social media, use of Apps, introduction to digital photography, perform simple online transactions; online banking and introduction to safety & security online. Each learner receives a certificate on completion.

(iv) TUS Maximise your Options

This is based on the experience and knowledge gained by staff at the Congress Centres in communicating with and supporting unemployed people on a daily basis, together with learning gained from programmes in Northern European countries.

The programme runs for eight weeks and learners complete three Fetac Level 3 programmes and a short traineeship with an employer for two weeks

In developing this programme the aims were:

■ Not to duplicate existing services

■ Support progression to employment through career guidance, personal development, motivation and information on training, education or other progression routes

■ Raise awareness of the pathways and supports available for returning to education and employment

■ Assist unemployed people to access and engage with statutory bodies

■ Update and develop skills for returning to the workplace or education

■ Assist unemployed people in coping with unemployment through support modules on mental and physical health, together with advice on coping with financial pressures.

- A selection of FETAC certified modules will be delivered throughout the course, to enhance confidence and life-skills of the participants and improve their readiness for work.

Trade Union Skillnet

The sectoral-based training support offered by Skillnets remains one of the few sources of funding available for workplace training. Skillnets Ltd. was established in 1999 and is funded from the National Training Fund (NTF) through the Department of Education and Skills (DES). It is a tri-partite body and Congress is represented on the board by Eamon Devoy, Nuala Keher and Peter Rigney.

The Trade Union Skillnet (TUS), first established in 2012, is supported by Congress, CWU, IBOA, INMO, MANDATE, SIPTU and TEEU. Maria Hegarty was appointed as Network Manager in early 2013 following a successful bid for funding in that year. Further contracts have followed for 2014 and 2015.

The unions involved agree a programme of training courses and seminars covering a wide range of subject areas. These have included: training for trade union reps, communications courses, health & safety and training and development.

The TUS is involved in two separate programmes. Most union training is delivered through the Training Networks Programme and this can fund up to 50% of allowable training costs, including management and administration costs. This is a very welcome contribution to supporting union learning. The second programme is the Job Seekers Support Programme (JSSP) which is targeted at the unemployed. This has supported a range of courses that have been offered through the Congress Centres Network under the general heading 'Maximise Your Options'. This has provided certified training in a number of modules alongside job placements supported by a mentor. The model has been very successful in facilitating progression into either further training or part or full-time employment. The impact of involvement in the TUS programmes can be demonstrated by the following figures:

2013 Figures

- There were 1,324 participants: 674 women and 650 men
- Of that number 126 women and 127 men were unemployed participants
- There were 334 unemployed training days and 2,695 employed training days
- There were 100 training courses delivered over 2013
- Under JSSP there were four Maximise Your Options courses.

2014 Figures

- There were 1,253 participants: 584 women and 669 men.
- 54 of the female participants and 42 male were unemployed.
- There were 1,955 employed training days and 151 unemployed training days.
- There were also 100 training courses delivered over 2014.
- In JSSP there were six Maximise Your Options courses.

TUS has been a good model of union cooperation and has demonstrated the benefits of working in a collective manner. This experience has been of huge importance as a step towards the broader cooperation envisaged by the union college. However, its remit covers only private sector training, which has limited the scope and impact of what we can do.

While TUS has been largely successful in achieving its targets, thanks to the work of the partners unions, the impact of austerity has been evident with the increased difficulty in securing release for trainees. This has often made the delivery of certified training - which might typically require five days or more of classroom attendance - quite difficult to achieve.

As we show signs of returning to economic growth, the question of release for participation in training is

an issue that unions want to see addressed so that the right to paid and additional unpaid leave can be established.

Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

QQI is a state agency established in 2013 with a board appointed by the Minister for Education & Skills. Its functions include those previously carried out by the Further Education & Training Awards Council (FETAC); the Higher Education & Training Awards Council (HETAC); the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

QQI has embarked on a major overhaul of the Ireland's qualifications system. This has included a strategic review of training providers' Quality Assurance (QA) policies and procedures. A working group consisting of the unions offering accredited training (Congress itself, CWU, IBOA, MANDATE, SIPTU and TEEU) was established to coordinate trade union responses to new arrangements being implemented by QQI.

A dialogue was opened with QQI and a wide range of issues have been addressed. It is clear that the new QA standards will be very difficult for any single union to implement and therefore a strategy was formally agreed between the participating unions to work toward a single entity which would oversee and implement a QA structure, for the trade union movement. The development of such an entity is consistent with the objectives and structures envisioned for Union College and is a necessary step for the development of trade union training. Dr Anne Murphy, who is attached to the Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU) in the Dublin Institute of Technology was appointed on a consultancy basis to assist the working group to develop its proposals. A new QA Handbook is in development which details how the policies would be implemented and it is hoped to be able to present these to QQI as a basis for discussion on how the trade union movement will engage with the new frameworks.

Congress has also engaged with QQI on arrangements for the Community & Voluntary Sector. A submission was made questioning the QQI's proposed fee structure and Congress appeared before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education & Social Protection in February 2014.

QQI has now set up a consultative committee with the C&V training sector - in which Congress is participating - which is seeking to arrive at an agreed strategy for how the sector will engage with the new framework.

Benefit 4

This is a programme run under the auspices of the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources which seeks to deliver training in basic IT skills to those who might have been excluded. This included unemployed people, immigrants, older people and early school-leavers. Over the last number of years some 5,000 people have participated in these courses that are run predominantly through the Congress Centres Network (CCN), while other courses have been offered by participating trade unions and by the Peoples College (See Congress Centres above).

Trade Union Studies Major Award



A consortium of unions has worked with Congress to develop training programmes to enable us to be in a position to deliver the new Trade Union Studies Major Award at Level 5.

In keeping with the new national qualifications framework, students can gain credits for successfully completing various components of the programme. A total of 90 credits are required for the full award, which can be gained as follows, based on each separate component being valued at 15 credits:



All of the following components:

-  Trade Union Representation
-  Union Organising Skills

At least one from the following components:

-  Work Experience
 -  Work Practice

At least one from the following components:

-  Communications
-  Teamwork

■ Personal Effectiveness

At least two from the following components:

■ Conflict Resolution

■ Intercultural Studies

■ Media Analysis

■ European Studies

■ Health & Safety Representation

■ Training & Development Contexts

■ Employment Law

■ Industrial Relations

■ Negotiation Skills

Programmes have been developed for nearly all of these components and have been submitted to QQI for approval. There have been considerable delays in some areas but it is hoped that all programmes will be available for delivery by mid-2015.

In addition, course programmes have also been developed for Global Development, to support the work being done by the Global Solidarity project, while a new course designed to comply with the QQI framework will also be developed for Disability Advocacy. It is hoped that this will enable us to recruit and train more Disability Champions in order to continue our work in this area.

Retired Workers Training

Arising from our experience of offering the Benefit 4 training, a specific training course was designed to meet the needs of members of our Retired Workers Committee, focusing on basic computer skills, use of email, social media and use of smart phones, the training received very positive feedback.

Economics Course

A new training course in Economics was developed in collaboration with the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI). Twelve modules were delivered as evening classes over a period of two months in Spring 2015 and received very positive feedback

from the senior officials and officers who attended. This course, which was delivered by tutors from NERI and a number of guest lecturers, will be further developed and aligned with QQI accreditation requirements.

Organising Courses

Training for organising was identified as a critical area of importance in the Training Needs Analysis conducted in 2012 and also emerged as a key area in discussions about a union college. The seminar in October 2013 on Organising for Decent Work also highlighted the important role of training in this area. Following an attempt at a pilot course, a working group consisting of union tutors and organisers was set up to review what training should be delivered in this area in order to cater for existing organisers and also to equip activists and officials with knowledge of organising strategies and techniques. This working group has produced proposals for a number of courses which are scheduled to run during the summer and autumn of 2015.

Project Management Course

Congress was one of a number of European confederations that supported the development of a new initiative seeking to make available project management training specifically designed for the needs of trade unions.

Led by the Education Department of ETUI an innovative suite of short training courses designed to equip trade union officers with appropriate skills in project work and project management has now been developed. This was done because it is recognised that projects have become increasingly important to trade unions. Four tutors from Congress affiliates were trained to deliver such training. A new course, based on the ETUI model, was developed and delivered, by tutors from IBOA and PSEU, in early 2015 for administrative staff in unions. Further courses are planned for later in the year. The course was notable in that it used the development and administrative model put in place for the Union College and allowed these procedures to be successfully tested.

Diploma in Training & Development

Very few unions have dedicated training or tutoring staff employed. Most rely on external trainers who

provide courses on a contract basis. If the trade union movement wants to further develop the range of courses it offered, it is essential to develop training skills within the movement to a high level. Accordingly, discussions took place with the Irish Institute for Training & Development to partner with them in offering a Diploma course that is accredited by University College Cork.

Sixteen participants from a variety of unions undertook the course which commenced in November 2014. The course is very demanding and requires a considerable amount of personal time and commitment from the students involved. This now gives us a progression route for people who have completed the new training and development training at Level 6. The course will be reviewed with participants when it completes in May 2015.

Certificate in Business Studies (Trade Union Studies)

This joint Congress/SIPTU course consists of six modules and is delivered on a two-year cycle. This is an advanced course and is accredited at Level 6 by QQI (HETAC) with a value of sixty (60) credits. Successful completion of the course earns the award of a Certificate in Business Studies (Trade Union Studies) and will be eligible to progress to the Honours Bachelor Degree in Industrial Relations & Human Resource Management in the National College of Ireland (NCI), to the Diploma in Business Studies and to the Honours Bachelor in Business Studies in University College Dublin (UCD) and to a range of other cognate degrees at levels 7 and 8.

This course has been developed in partnership with the National College of Ireland and is designed for learners who are trade union members and activists.

The modules of the course are delivered on the basis of three terms per year with one module being delivered each term. Each module typically takes one class per week for ten weeks; classes are offered one evening a week. The six modules covered are:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work;
- Human Resource Management;
- Equality and Diversity;

- Introduction to Irish Employment Law;
- Collective Bargaining and the Theory and Practice of Negotiation and
- Introduction to Economics.

The course has the flexibility to allow new learners to sign up at any point in the cycle. The course has proved very popular and the last two years has seen significant expansion in the numbers taking it up. Two separate streams have been running at SIPTU College in Dublin through 2013 and 2014. Waterford commenced delivery of the course in September 2013 while further courses were offered in Cork and Limerick in 2014. Further opportunities for expansion of the course provision are being assessed for 2015/6.

Participation in the courses during 2013 and 2014 has been as follows:

Dublin		
	2013	2014
SIPTU	19	21
POA	12	10
BATU	3	3
CWU	2	2
MANDATE	1	0
CPSU	1	1
IMPACT	3	3
TUI	1	1
UNITE	1	1

Waterford		
	2013	2014
SIPTU	11	12
CWU	1	1
IMPACT	2	2

Limerick		
	2014	
SIPTU	10	
IMPACT	1	

Cork	
	2014
SIPTU	14
IMPACT	2
CWU	1
MANDATE	2
POA	1
TEEU	1

Peoples College

The College was honoured by a visit by President Michael D. Higgins on March 25,

2015 for the unveiling of a portrait of Ruaidhrí Roberts, founder of the College and former General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions.

In his wide ranging speech, President Higgins recalled that throughout the 66 years of its existence, the People's College had provided Irish workers with the tools and knowledge that enabled them to shape their environment as critical and informed actors. It has provided them with a space from which to develop their intellectual and creative potential and build up their capacity for collective action.

He also paid homage to the achievements of Ruaidhrí Roberts, as a visionary trade unionist who placed the provision of adult education for workers at the heart of his practice.

In the organisation of this visit, we were greatly supported by Congress staff and the Teachers' Club, as well as our own Central Council and Student Committee. In 2013, Jim Dorney was elected President of the College.

He has taken to his role with enthusiasm bringing a new dynamism to our operations. He has focused on increasing union affiliation to the College, enhancing its image and introducing new ideas for lectures and courses.

Particularly interesting were two series of lectures in Spring 2014 on Trades Unions in A Time of Change and the Irish Revolution: 1913 - 1923.

Both were well attended and brought new people into contact with the College.



A lecture series on Irish Pension Provision at the Crossroads was also organised as well as a 10-week course on the Irish economy.

A series of short-term courses in IT were also organised, some of which were funded by Congress under a scheme supported by the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources. Thanks are due to Congress for their support and also to the Nevin Economic Research Institute.

As part of the core Syllabus, an average of forty-five courses was offered in each of the years under review. They covered areas such as Languages, Arts, Music & Creativity, Social, Cultural & Environmental Studies, Personal Development & Social Skills. Courses on politics and European affairs continue to attract interest.

Environmental course such as Wild Life and Hill Walking are also popular while Art and Music remain perennial favourites. This year we added some new courses including an Introduction to Japanese Culture and First Aid, as well as reintroducing German.

Some of the day classes have been organised successfully although most of the classes take place in the evening. Art Appreciation takes place in the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery on Saturday mornings. Many classes take place in the Teachers Club and some in Congress House.

Enrolments have remained stable over the two years. We have used the Internet and Facebook extensively this year to promote the College – this too will have helped to maintain participation.

The 2014 Spring Survey The College & You showed that patterns of enrolments remained stable: 30% of the 2013/14 intake was new to the College. Of the rest, 45% had been with the College for between two and five years, with 17% for up to 10 years and the remaining 8% for more than 10 years and a few for at least 20 years.

Some 65% were between 50-65 years of age; 10% were over 65 and another 15% were between 36 and 50 and the remaining 10% were under 35 years of age. Some 60% of the students are female and 40% male. The vast majority of the respondents were Irish with only 6% non-Irish.

The Student Committee continues to play a key role in the College, both as a support to the administration and in representing the views of the student body, particularly in developing the syllabus each year. It also organises social and cultural events throughout the year.

The Choir continues to flourish, participating in choral festivals at both national and international level. It also performs at social events for the College and at community events around the city. It figured prominently in President Higgin's visit to the College, to the extent that he requested an encore.

The Debating Society also plays a major role in College life organising debates and training sessions for its members.

The Drama Group is developing steadily and has put on sketches and plays in the Teachers' Club Theatre.

Priorities for next two years:

Our priority for the next two years will be to continue to fulfil the role described so eloquently by President Higgins in his final remark to us on the occasion of his visit:

"May I, then, commend all of you who have been and are now involved in this great educational institution for promoting a holistic understanding of work and learning as a complementary and mutually reinforcing source of personal fulfilment and freedom, collective emancipation and democratic flourishing."

Nevin Economic Research Institute

The research effort and output of NERI is organised around the following five major themes:

1. Labour market developments and outlook – wages, jobs and pensions
2. Investment in key economic and social infrastructure
3. Enterprise policy
4. Macro-economic outlook and fiscal options
5. Options for the reform of banking

The Institute uses the Quarterly Economic Observer to periodically address each of these areas. Separately, staff members have written on low pay and the living wage (See Section Two), the importance of public capital spending in sustaining the economic recovery, and on the impact of changes to various direct and indirect forms of taxation on the income distribution.

NERI continues to contribute extensively to analyses of trends in the labour market, North and South. In addition, the Institute has produced research on a new industrial policy for Northern Ireland and is currently working to establish a long-term vision for the economy and society on the island of Ireland. (See Section Three).

The Institute's website (<http://www.nerinstitute.net/>) is an important outlet for its work. The director provides a regular weekly blog that covers a diverse range of relevant economic and social issues.

The website also features the Quarterly Economic Facts publication and contributions from other NERI staff members that interpret a wide range of key indicators on various aspects of the economy.

Content from presentations given by NERI staff at various trade union events and academic

conferences are also available on the site. Slides from these presentations often highlight key research findings from detailed working papers. The Institute also uses its inBrief series to distil important research findings into digestible four-page briefings.

Finally, NERI uses social media platforms to highlight ongoing work and upcoming events (see @NERI_research and/or the Institute's Facebook page).

The Institute's events are an additional outlet that connect its work to issues facing unions affiliated to the organisation. The Institute has established a monthly seminar series that addresses key public policy issues. Over the past six months, the seminars have looked at a range of issues, including:

- Regional development;
- Deprivation on the island of Ireland;
- Devolution in the aftermath of the Scottish referendum;
- Funding universal healthcare,
- Outsourcing in the public sector.

NERI's annual labour market conference brings together academics from all parts of the island to discuss issues in the workplace ranging from pay and pension provision to childcare.

The NERI annual lecture is named in honour of the former General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Dónal Nevin. In addition to his work in the trade union movement, Dónal was a highly regarded historian with a deep commitment to ending poverty and promoting social justice. The inaugural NERI annual lecture was given by the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins on May 23, 2013.

Professor Stephany Griffith-Jones, Financial Markets Program Director at the Initiative for Policy Dialogue at Columbia University, gave the 2014 lecture on the role state development bank's play in fostering long-run economic growth. Professor Griffith-Jones looked at the best way to use the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to help regenerate economic recovery especially in regards

to key areas of social investment and lending to businesses.

The 2015 lecture was held in the Royal Irish Academy on May 8 and was delivered by Professor Mariana Mazzucato. Her talk covered the main themes from her most recent book *The Entrepreneurial State*: debunking the public vs. private sector myths. Professor Mazzucato argues that placing innovation at the heart of economic policy requires a highly-skilled public sector that provides a clear vision and long-term finance, while working with business to create new avenues for growth. She delivered a cogent analysis of the ways the state can catalyse, influence and connect to the growth of business organisations to an audience comprised of representatives from the trade union movement, the business community, civil society and the public sector—including the Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, Alex White TD.

By maintaining a strong output of credible, robust research papers relevant to contemporary socio-economic challenges, NERI has become an influential contributor to national print and broadcast media. The breadth and detail of the research has enhanced the organisation's reputation in the academic community and allowed it to contribute in a meaningful way to conferences and briefings organised by affiliate unions. In seeking to build on this platform, the Institute has agreed an ambitious programme of work with contributing members that can be accessed at:

http://www.nerinstitute.net/research/prog_of_work

NERI Staff

Dublin

Tom Healy (Director)

Tom Healy is Director of the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI). Tom has previously worked in the Economic & Social Research Institute, the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development, the National Economic & Social Forum and the Department of Education & Skills.

He holds a PhD (economics and sociology) from UCD. His research interests have included the impact of education and social capital on well-being.

Micheál Collins (Senior Research Officer)

Micheál Collins is Senior Research Officer at the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI). His research interests and publications are in the areas of income distribution, taxation, economic evaluation and public policy.

Prior to joining NERI he was Assistant Professor of Economics at Trinity College Dublin. He is Chairman of the Irish Social Policy Association (ISPA) and a former chairman of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) of Ireland. He was a member of the Republic of Ireland's Commission on Taxation (2008-2009) and the Government's Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare (2011-2014). He was a member of the technical group that developed the living wage for Ireland.

Micheál is a native of Ennis in Co. Clare and a graduate of NUI Galway, UCC and the University of Dublin, Trinity College. He is an Adjunct Professor of Economics at Trinity College Dublin and is a fellow of the Regional Studies Association (FeRSA).

Tom McDonnell - Economist

Tom McDonnell is an economist at the NERI specialising in growth theory, the economics of innovation, the Irish economy, and macroeconomics and banking policy. He previously worked as an economist at TASC and before that he taught economics at NUI Galway and at DCU.

Tom obtained his Masters Degree in Economics, as well as his PhD in economics from NUI Galway. He is a native of Limerick city.

Paul Mac Flynn - Economist

Paul Mac Flynn is an economist at the NERI specialising in the Northern Ireland Economy. He is a graduate of University College Dublin with a BA in Economics and Politics and the University of Bristol with an MSc in Economics and Public Policy, specialising in the economic impacts of political devolution in the UK. Having previously worked in financial services he is now based with NERI in Belfast.

Daragh McCarthy (Research & Administration Officer)

Daragh is the research and administration officer at the NERI. He is responsible for planning NERI events, publicising the Institute's work and general office administration. Previously, Daragh worked in the Commercial Evaluations department in Enterprise Ireland and in TASC—where he was involved in projects on health inequalities, public finance and income distribution in Ireland.

Daragh is a graduate of Dublin City University (BA in Business and Finance) and University College Dublin (MSc in International Relations).

PART V

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Trade Unions for Marriage Equality

Valentine's Day 2015 saw the public launch of Trade Unionists for Civil Marriage Equality, in Liberty Hall. This was in response to the planned May 22 referendum to change the Constitution and insert the following wording: "Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex."

Congress called for a Yes vote and encouraged trade union members to actively campaign in favour of making civil marriage available to same-sex couples on an equal basis to heterosexual couples.

Trade Unionists for Civil Marriage Equality is an umbrella group drawn from across the trade union movement, formed to encourage all members to vote and campaign for civil marriage equality.

Trade union support for civil marriage equality is consistent with our work in defending low paid workers, in fighting for better pay, in defending the most vulnerable, in campaigning for better pay, pensions and terms and conditions of employment. The trade union movement was to the fore in securing equal pay for women, maternity rights,

equality legislation and in seeking to improve the rights of working parents. It is a struggle which continues today.

LGBT trade unionists played a pioneering role in the campaign for gay rights in Ireland, leading the campaign for decriminalisation of homosexuality, fighting discrimination in the workplace and helping secure the Civil Partnership Act, which grants same sex couples legal recognition but does not confer the rights or status of civil marriage.

In 1982, Congress published ground breaking guidelines on negotiating for the rights of gay and lesbian members, in the workplace.

Trade Unionists for Civil Marriage Equality believe that each citizen is entitled to full equality and a Yes vote will eliminate one of the pillars of inequality in Irish society and encouraged all trade unionists to play a part by joining our network and by working within their union to ensure friends, colleagues and neighbours took part in the campaign.

The 1913 Lockout Commemoration

The 1913 Lockout is of major significance to the trade union movement, not just because it saw the birth of the modern labour movement and the defeat of the most determined attempt by employers ever undertaken in this country to crush mass trade unionism, but because it is a reminder of what remains to be achieved– the right to collective bargaining, to organise and to represent people in their place of work.

This remains a matter of concern for working people and for society in general: apart from taxation, collective bargaining is the most effective means of redistributing wealth.

When this right is eroded, or denied, inequality increases. Erosion of incomes affects long term life choices and a lowering of living standards for the general working population.

The richer those at the top of society become, the greater their capacity to deny workers a fair share of the wealth they have created.

The centenary of the Lockout provided a crucial opportunity to address those issues and to advance our enduring vision of an equitable and just society.

It was the shared view of the Executive Council that the Lockout commemoration should be an inclusive, participative, ambitious and memorable tribute to the men and women of 1913, which should have lasting impacts with communities in 2013 and beyond.

To this end an extensive programme of activities and events was planned and implemented.

A number of unions together with Congress put in place the majority of the funding to back the programme, which was supported by the government, Dublin City Council, the National Museum, National Library, National Archives, Hugh Lane Gallery and a range of other institutions and organisations, thus ensuring that the anniversary of the Lockout arrested the attention and captured the interest of people across the capital and beyond.

The most effective activities were those carried out in collaboration with other organisations where resources, expertise and networks could be pooled.

Strong partnerships were forged with the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, Dublin City Council, the National Library, the National Museum, the National College of Art & Design, the National Archive and a range of other institutions and bodies, such as the Glasnevin Museum Trust, which helped to extend the commemoration to a very wide audience.

Almost 200,000 people officially participated in or attended events related to the Lockout commemoration. These are figures collected through ticket sales or attendances. However, they do not include the many thousands who attended lectures or seminars or the myriad of other events organised within communities or by individual unions.

President Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina Higgins supported the Lockout Commemoration with immense enthusiasm, participating in a range of events which included leading the National Commemoration of 'Bloody Sunday'. Their involvement was the highlight of the year.

Programme Highlights

Jim Larkin Commemoration

January 30, 2013, commemoration held at graveside of Jim Larkin in Glasnevin Cemetery

National Tapestry Project

Launched September 18, 2012, completed and unveiled by President Higgins, on September 18, 2013

Cork Studies in the Irish Revolution

March 1/2, 2013, conference held with over 30 speakers addressing themes such as Irish Feminism and Labour Before the Lockout

Women's Seminar: One Struggle

March 8/9, 2013. Seminar held to mark International Women's Day attended by over 300 women from more than 40 unions.

One City, One Book

April 2013, Strumpet City is chosen as the One City One Book by Dublin City Councillors. Launched by Lord Mayor in Liberty Hall in March 2013.

Men and Masters: The Great Lockout of 1913

May, 29/30 Gorey, Co. Wexford, conference opened by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform.

Reflecting on a Decade of War & Revolution in Ireland

The Cause of Labour, 1912-1923

June 15, 2013, Liberty Hall, joint Irish Universities-Irish Times Conference was premier academic historical event of the year. Keynote address by President Michael D Higgins.

Dublin Tenement Experience

July 4 – August 31, 2013, ground breaking Tenement

Living the Lockout on Dublin's Henrietta Street

Experience opened to the public for two months by ANU Productions brought to life the harsh realities of tenement life during the Lockout.

Áras an Uachtaráin Garden Party

July 10, 2013, President Michael D Higgins hosted a garden party at Áras an Uachtaráin to commemorate the 1913 Lockout.

Dublin Lockout Exhibition

August 2013 to March 2014, The National Library of Ireland

A commemorative exhibition using rare archival material. An online study resource was developed to enable the material to be used for the Lockout

Schools' Programme. Run in partnership with National Library of Ireland, and curated by Padraig Yeates and Peter Rigney.

The Story of the Lockout: August 2013 – February 2014, Liberty Hall

Installation

Three sides of Liberty Hall wrapped in a spectacular depiction of the Lockout story.

The Spirit of Mother Jones Festival Cork

30 July to 1 August 2013, the festival in Cork focused on the Lockout. Speakers and artists from Britain and the United States discussed issues such as social justice and labour history with local experts.

National Commemorative Ceremony

August 31, 2013. Held in O'Connell Street to mark the anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday' the event was led by President Michael D Higgins with performances by some of Ireland's leading artists and entertainers. President Higgins laid a wreath fashioned as the Starry Plough at the James Larkin statue followed by a minute's silence. Representatives of the Irish, British, European and International Trade Union Confederations also laid wreaths of red roses. North Inner City Folklore Project reenacted the infamous 'baton charge' on 'Bloody Sunday' by the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary.

ANU: Thirteen, Dublin Fringe Festival

September 5-22 2013, Dramatisation of episodes and characters from the Lockout – the highlight being the reenactment of the Askwith Inquiry in Dublin Castle.

Seanad Éireann Lockout Address By the General Secretary, Congress David Begg

September 26, 2013. A special invitation was extended to General Secretary to address Seanad Éireann on 26 September 2013. The well-attended address led to excellent debate on the Lockout and workers' rights in contemporary Ireland including collective bargaining.



Duel Personalities

September 29, 2013, Dublin Castle, readings from the Askwith Tribunal by actors.

SS Hare Food Ship Reenactment

October 5/6, 2013, the 'SS Hare' was met in Dublin port by members of the Larkin and Connolly families and by Irish and British Trade Union leaders. The Samuel Beckett Bridge was opened and Port of Dublin tugs marked its passage with a water cannon display. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Dublin and Sabina Higgins, wife of the President were among the guests.

Banners Unfurled

October 10 November 2013, exhibition of historically Important trade union banners and badges was held in National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin. 27,695 people visited the exhibition over the six week period.

Dublin Divided

Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, Dublin
November 6, 2013 to 2 February 2, 2014. The Hugh Lane in Parnell Square hosted this exhibition to mark the Lockout Centenary which contained works by artists associated with the Lockout. 52,000 people visited the exhibition.

James Plunkett Short Story Award 2013

December 2012 – October 2013, launched by President Michael D Higgins and IMPAC Award winner Kevin Barry. Organised by the Irish Writers'

Union in partnership with the Irish Writers' Centre. Over 700 writers participated.

The Risen People

The Abbey Theatre closed the year with a new production of James Plunkett's The Risen People which included a new musical score and 19 songs. 25,670 people viewed the play over the period.

Glasnevin Trust Exhibition

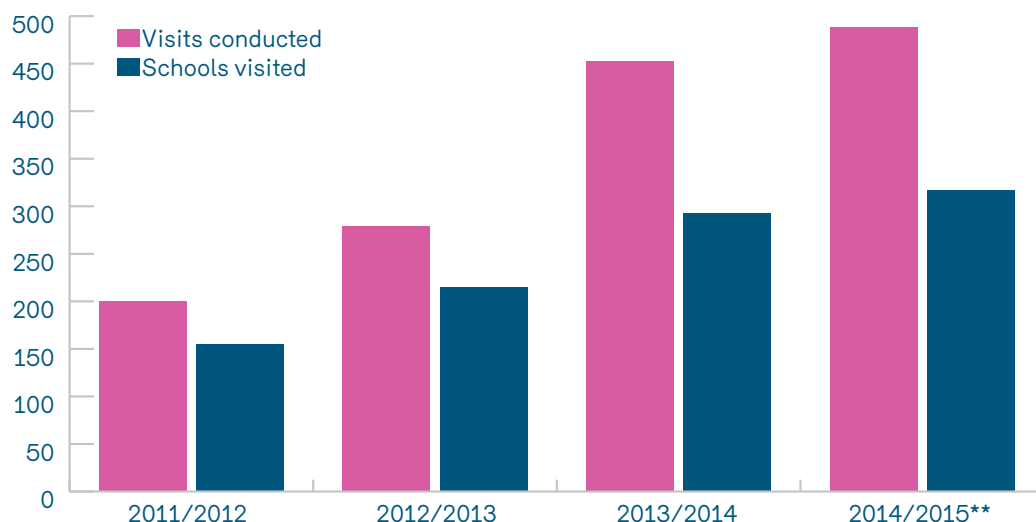
December 11, 2013, launched by Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to mark the centenary of the Irish Volunteers. Panels from the Tapestry were also on display.

Alicia Brady Commemoration

January 4, 2014, commemoration of Alicia Brady in Glasnevin Cemetery.

Alicia was a 16 year old worker in Jacob's Biscuit Factory along with 300 other women and 600 men who were locked out because of their stand in support of the workers on strike in the Dublin United Tramway Company. She was among the last people to die as a result of social conflict surrounding the 1913 Lockout when she was hit by a ricochet from a revolver fired by a strike breaker.

Annual School visits



Youth Engagement

Youth Connect School Programme

The Youth Connect education and engagement programme is now in its fourth year of operation and has delivered lessons to thousands of students across hundreds of schools.

The programme employs a number of teaching graduates, who are trained in the module content to enable them deliver introductory and specific workshops and classes on topics which include: the world of work, employment rights, trade unions and solidarity, globalisation and global solidarity, income inequality, the 1913 Lockout and the struggle for Decent Work.

It is envisaged that the programme will continue to develop more modules and resources on new and interesting topics, related to the world of work, introduced each year through its annual Youth for Decent Work awards [see below]. We expect to see the announcement of the topic for next year's Youth for Decent Work Awards, in mid-2015.

School Visits

Since September 2014 the Youth Connect programme has conducted 489 visits across 317 unique schools, indicating that we are on target to exceed last year's figures.

We have delivered 1,056 lessons to 21,899 students across the country. This will also make

the programme one of the largest, if not the largest, school outreach programme in the country.

The chart below shows the visits conducted since the inception of the programme in 2011.

During the 2013-2014 academic year the Youth Connect programme conducted 462 actual visits to 293 unique schools and delivered 735 classes [averaging 70 minutes each], directly to 20,074, predominantly senior-cycle, students.

The chart above shows the breakdown of visits conducted this year on a monthly basis:

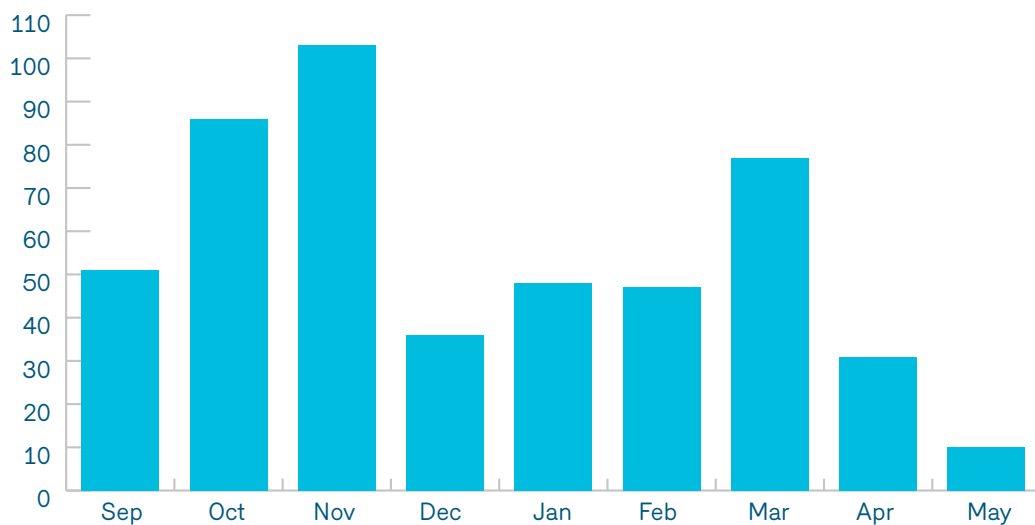
1913-2013 School Commemorative Programme

A new labour history module for the schools resource pack was developed in consultation with Pádraig Yeates, author and historian and Caitríona Crowe, Senior Archivist, National Archives.

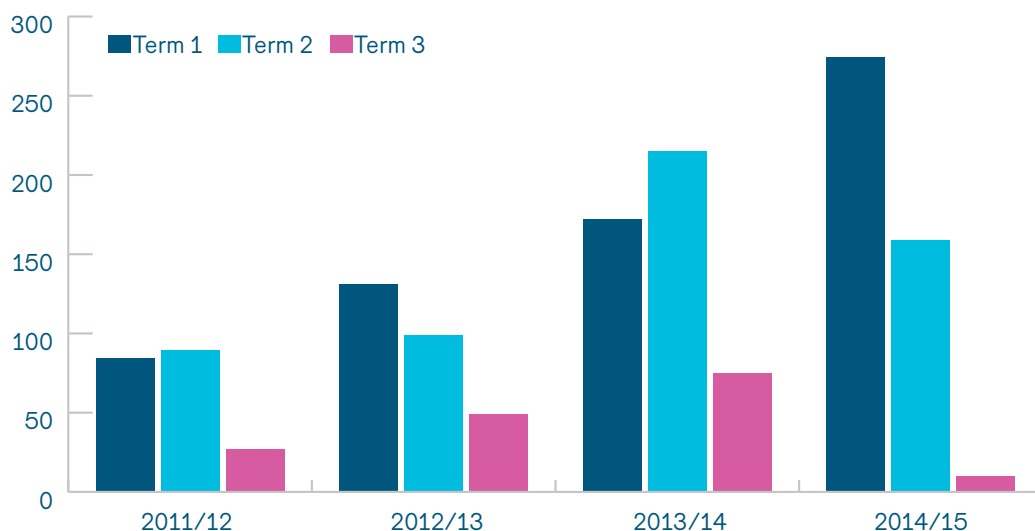
The new module deals specifically with the Lockout and contains a comprehensive account of the events of 1913 and early 1914, the persons involved and the context in which it occurred. The module is an interactive resource which focusses on student engagement and encourages active learning.

The aim is for students to gain an appreciation of the economic, social and political conditions of 1913 and understand the causes of the Lockout and its consequences.

2014-2015 Monthly Visits



Annual comparisons by Term



It also seeks to encourage students to identify and understand the parallels and differences between life and work, then and now and appreciate the importance of the decent work agenda.

The lesson plans allow students to progress through the events in a chronological fashion whilst providing them with the space to discover what life was like for young people and workers at the time.

It also provides students with the opportunity to appreciate the duty of debt to those workers and trade unionists who were instrumental in providing the foundations for some of the better conditions enjoyed in Ireland today.

Other key resources which were also developed to complement the learning around these events included a four part **Tenement Tales series** and a recording of **Living the Lockout, the Tenement Experience**, produced by ANU productions and performed during the summer of 1913.

All of these resources are available for use by schools throughout the country and are part of our champions' repository of resources which form the basis of the short workshops that are delivered throughout the school network across the academic year.

Youth for Decent Work Awards

This competition was first introduced in the academic year 2013-2014 for second-level students. The aim is to encourage the further engagement of students in work related issues and to re-interpret these issues for a younger audience.

The competition fulfils a long-held ambition of the programme to ensure a more comprehensive means to engage with students which allows us to understand their perspective and interpretation of the world and their perception of trade unions.

The competition is particularly valuable in that it allows us to introduce new related topics to students on a regular basis in such a way that encourages engagement, research and learning by them.

It also allows us to assess how our messages and themes are communicated and received by students.

The competition provides us with a wealth of student created materials which we continue to use throughout the programme and is available to schools to use in the delivery of such topics to their students.

The energy and enthusiasm which comes through the students' work is inspiring as they have embraced the competitions with such creativity and fun. Their commitment bringing their ideas to fruition in such an engaging way is what makes this competition so successful.

We have learned a lot from this competition and are continually surprised by the standards of production and the level of engagement, on the part of the students.

In its first year [2013-2014] the **Youth For Decent Work Awards** attracted some **47** individual team video entries from across the country on the theme of the learning from the **1913 Lockout and the importance of Decent Work**.

In late March 2014 we screened 20 of the best videos to an audience of approximately 450 students, teachers and trade unionists. Entries were made under a number of categories, including: Best Acting Team, Best Screenplay, Best Interpretation, Most Creative, Best Edit/Animation and Overall Best Video.

The winners of each category received an educational workshop as a prize with the overall winner - Colaiste Chiarain, Limerick - visiting New York for five days with their teacher and visiting a number of organisations including the American Federation of Teachers [AFT].

The second year of the competition ran on the theme of **Income Inequality & Decent Work**. The response from schools was fantastic with **93** video entries from **72** schools submitted.

The screening took place on February 26, 2015 in the Savoy Cinema, Dublin, to an audience of close to **700** people. The overall winners were CBS, Thurles.

The feedback received from teachers suggested that the availability of a set of resources for the competition was crucial to their involvement and from the students' perspectives the trip to New York is certainly a large incentive for their engagement.

However, both teachers and students also indicated that the opportunity to see their work screened in a cinema to an audience of their peers was very exciting and another significant incentive for their participation.

Youth Alliances

In 2013, Congress worked on a brief collaborative project with student unions at both second and third level - ISSU and USI respectively.

This resulted in an agreed document "Locked out? Investing in a Future for Youth" which contained a number of key demands including a National Jobs Strategy for Young People, a Stimulus Programme, major investment in the Youth Guarantee, a legal framework for work placements, the creation of a new Career Information service and a new National Skills Map.

The three organisations called on the government to immediately address the many crises which faced the youth of Ireland, particularly the lock-out of young people from the jobs' market.

Congress presented the proposals contained in this paper at a number of events dealing with the Youth Guarantee, including at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education & Skills.

(3) COMMUNICATIONS, CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

Developing Online Union Presence

A Social Media Mapping Exercise/ Survey was carried out among members of the Communications Group, in early 2014, to establish the level of union/ affiliate engagement with these new platforms and outlets. While there has been change and progress in the intervening period, the exercise did highlight a lack of technical capacity and resources (financial and human) across unions, in this area. As a result, a one day training session was organised for group members to cover all aspects of online and digital media, including: website usage, email actions, social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr etc).

In addition, a separate session dealing with online campaigning was held later in 2014 with a very incisive briefing provided by John Wood, Campaigns & New Media Officer with the TUC.

This session also looked at the development of online news platforms and heard from Tamara Gausi, the editor of Equal Times, which is the digital news platform of the International Trade Union Confederation. This highly-successful venture attracts up to 7000 unique visitors/ readers daily and, with a strong focus on social justice, aims to give voice to people the world over who are either absent from or under-represented in traditional media outlets.

Based in Brussels and with stories translated into three languages, Equal Times is supported by a network of over 50 correspondents worldwide. www.equaltimes.org/

Congress Online Platform

During the course of 2014, work progressed on the development of a union news platform that would act as centralised location for all news output from affiliates. A development site is now in situ, featuring 12 separate news feeds from affiliates and Congress. The site also hosts and displays video and still picture output from unions and includes built-in social media functionality. While still in development, it

is hoped this can be developed as part of a more progressive, coherent union presence in the digital sphere.

Conferences

Reports on the majority of conferences and seminars organised in the period under review are carried elsewhere in this publication, in the sections relevant to their area.

One of the most significant public events run by Congress in this period was the major international conference held in Dublin's Mansion House on April 11, 2014.

A New Course for Better Times was organised to mark the departure from Ireland of the 'uncaring technocrats' of the Troika and was designed to begin the slow task of constructing

an alternative vision for the island of Ireland and a new model of economic development.

It also tied the Troika's departure to the Congress-organised commemoration of the 1913 Lockout, seeing a historical symmetry in the crash and events in Dublin over one hundred years ago. The conference literature posed the key question:

"As the commemoration of the 1913 Lockout drew to a close, Ireland officially exited the bailout programme and appeared to start on the road to recovery. But after six years of deep crisis is lasting recovery a realistic prospect, or will the deeply-embedded values of William Martin Murphy overwhelm all attempts to steer Ireland on a new path?"

The conference boasted an impressive array of national and international speakers and was attended by some 350 delegates.

In advance of the conference, Congress circulated copies of a crucial Eurozone investment and stimulus plan produced by the German union federation, the DGB, entitled A New Marshall Plan for Europe, which outlined a detailed and costed plan for re-inflating the flatlining Eurozone economy. Copies of the plan can be downloaded from this link: http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/marshall_plan_final_0411.pdf

Among the keynote speakers at the conference was the head of the DGB, Reiner Hoffman. The conference also heard from Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, TD; Professor Sean O'Riain; Professor David Jacobson; Tom Healy, David Begg and representatives from a number of political parties.

Conference documents and video clips of keynote presentations can be viewed here: <http://www.ictu.ie/press/diary/2014/04/11/>



Breast Cancer Guide

On September 24, 2014, Congress launched an important **new guide to assist workers diagnosed with breast cancer** and other serious illnesses, during treatment, recovery and their return to work.

The guide was formally launched by An Tanaiste, Joan Burton TD, Bernice Glavin, a staff nurse and breast cancer survivor who has written about her experiences and Michelle Monaghan, a radiographer in Connolly Hospital, Dublin, David Begg and INMO General Secretary Liam Doran.

The guide was launched in conjunction with the INMO and SIPTU, with the launch hosted by the INMO in their head office.



The guide is designed to assist workers and their unions to negotiate workplace arrangements to help minimise the financial impact of taking time off for treatment and recovery.

A copy of the guide can be downloaded from: http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/breast_cancer_guide.pdf

The Ethical Workplace

In February 2015, Congress welcomed an invitation from the President of Ireland to become involved in supporting his Ethics Initiative and, in response, Congress organised **the Ethical Workplace** project that ran for the duration of March.

The Ethical Workplace was formally launched at the ILO's annual Edward Phelan Lecture, in Dublin on February 26, which was delivered by President Michael D. Higgins.

As part of the Congress input, an online platform was set up to allow workers have their voice and opinions heard on the idea of the ethical workplace. We posed a simple question and asked workers to respond: What does an Ethical Workplace Mean to You?

Those contributing online could chose to post a comment or use a variety of social media platforms to post a picture or short video. These comments have been collated and are available to view here: <https://storify.com/congress/the-ethical-workplace>

In addition, special postcards were printed and distributed at key events, with people asked to respond in writing.

Congress also commissioned filmmakers to create a short film to mark the initiative, filming people's response to the key question in a variety of settings and geographical locations. That film is available to view here: <https://vimeo.com/126589843>

Overall, several hundred people participated and the idea of an ethical workplace was discussed at a number of key events: including those with work and those seeking work, new migrants and women workers, healthcare workers, manufacturing workers and striking workers.

The final report on the initiative – along with the collected material - was presented to President Higgins at an event on April 30.

Mental Health

A seminar on Mental Health & the Workplace seminar was held in October 2014 with participation from: the Health & Safety Authority, the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission, See Change and EU OSHA. It was chaired by broadcaster Dil Wickremasinghe, of Newstalk.

The full report from the seminar is available at: <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2014/10/23/mental-health-and-the-workplace-seminar/>

As a follow up, Congress facilitated the holding of a suicide awareness event for trade unions in January 2015: <http://www.ictu.ie/press/diary/2015/01/27/suicide-alertness-workshop-now-full/>

Report on BDC 2013

The Irish Congress of Trade Union's 2013 Biennial Delegate Conference took place in The Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, Fisherwick Place, Belfast from Tuesday 2nd July to Thursday 4th July, 2013. Mr E McGlone, Congress President presided over proceedings.

The members of the Standing Orders Committee were: Ms J Gaffney (IMPACT), Mr P Guilfoyle (TEEU), Mr A Kenny (TUI), Ms C Martin (UNITE) and Mr KJ McGinley, (SIPTU), (Chair).

The following Tellers were elected: M M Staunton (IMPACT), Mr D Fagan (CPSU), Mr K McCabe (NIPSA), Ms M McKenna (UNISON) and Mr S Searson (NASUWT).

531 delegates and 90 observers attended the Conference. 42 Motions and 2 Emergency Motions were submitted to BDC, all of which were adopted, with Motion 34 being withdrawn. A report on the Actions on Motions to BDC2013 is contained in an appendix to this report.

The keynote and fraternal speakers at BDC were: The Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly, General Secretary of ETUC, The Lord Mayor of Belfast, The Chairperson of Belfast Trades Council, Mr D Keenan, Congress Youth Committee, Mr J Matthews, Congress Centres Network, Ms D O'Connor Congress Disability Committee, Ms M Mulcahy, Congress Women's Committee, Mr M O'Halloran and Ms M Galloway, Congress Retired Workers Committee.

The following Officers were elected: Mr J Douglas, MANDATE, President, Mr B Campfield, NIPSA Ms P King, SIPTU and Vice-Presidents and Mr J O'Flynn, SIPTU, Treasurer. The following were elected to the Ordinary Panel of the Executive Council: Mr L Broderick, IBOA, Ms E Buckley, SIPTU, Mr K Callinan, IMPACT, Mr S Cody, IMPACT, Mr E Devoy, TEEU, Mr S Dooley, NUJ, Mr L Doran, INMO, Mr S Fitzpatrick, CWU, Mr T Geraghty, PSEU, Mr A Hall, TEEU, Ms A Hall-Callaghan, UTU, Mr J Kelly, Unite, Mr P King, ASTI, Mr G Light, MANDATE, Mr E McGlone, UNITE, Mr P MacMenamin, TUI, Mr J McCamphill, NASUWT, Ms P McKeown, Unison, Ms A Millar, NIPSA, Mr J Moore, UCATT, Ms M Morgan, NIPSA, Ms A Morrissey, MANDATE, Ms P Ni Sheaghdha, INMO, Ms S Nunan, INTO, Mr J O'Connor, SIPTU, Ms L O'Donnell, IMPACT, Mr E Ronayne, CPSU, Ms A Speed, UNISON, Mr D Thomas, AHCPS, Mr N Ward, INTO. Mr C Cronin, CTU, was elected on the Local Reserve Panel.

Congress held the following Fringe Meetings at Conference: Tuesday 2nd July, NERI Fringe Event, Wednesday 3rd, Global Solidarity Fringe, Wednesday 3rd July, TUPF Fringe, Thursday 4th July, Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining.

The General Secretary, Mr David Begg, announced his intention to retire before the 2015 Biennial Delegate Conference.

Congress would like to acknowledge the support of our exhibitors at Conference and also for the support of the advertisers in the Executive Council Report 2013.

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SECTION 8 INTERNATIONAL





INTERNATIONAL

Our work during the period included support for human and trade union campaigns, lobbying at national, EU and international levels, development cooperation projects, with a particular focus on countries that experience severe violations of trade union and workers' rights.

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

The General Secretary is a member of the ETUC Executive Committee and participates fully in the activities of that body. Other members of the Secretariat participate in a wide range of ETUC sub-committees and working parties. Moreover, the General Secretary was selected to represent the ETUC at two recent public engagements in Brussels.

As might be anticipated, the principal focus of ETUC activity is in trying to save the edifice of 'Social Europe'. The default to decision making by intergovernmentalism during the crisis made it more difficult to make an impact.

The fact that the Barosso Commission was inept and difficult to deal with compounded this problem. While it is early days yet the Juncker-led Commission seems anxious to try to restore dialogue with the ETUC. But the bottom line is that everything in Europe over the last few years has been dominated by the crisis and that has not yet changed.

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Congress is represented by Mr Jack O'Connor, in an alternate arrangement with the Trade Union Congress (TUC), on the Executive of the ITUC. The importance of the ITUC is its role in building solidarity internationally, in campaigning and advocacy, and in its statutory right of access at the highest level to bodies like the International Labour Office (ILO), International Monetary Fund), World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The General Secretary participated, as a representative of ITUC, in a meeting with the Chief Economist of the IMF in July, 2014.

Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership

One of the most controversial developments during the period under review was the continued negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the United States and the European Union.

Congress held a session on TTIP with internationally renowned author and commentator, Susan George, at the 2014 Global Solidarity Summer School in Belfast.

We also held a seminar on the same theme, in December 2014, in Dublin, which featured inputs from both the ETUC and the AFLCIO.

While not opposed to trade, it is the Congress view that there are significant and very strong reasons to oppose the planned trade deal.

TTIP is different to any deal that has gone before and could result in a serious erosion of public services, labour rights and standards across the EU.

The proposed deal could see workplace and consumer rights driven down to the lowest common denominator.

We also have the spectre of secret courts being established to satisfy the needs of corporations and investors, courts whose findings could not be subject to judicial review and which will privilege investors over citizens.

We presented a trade union perspective on the proposed deal to a number of fora, including:

- European Commission consultation on ISDS;
- Public meetings on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): July 2014 in Comhlamh and September 2014 at the JFK memorial Summer School in New Ross.
- Meetings with the Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, including participation in the 2015 DJEI seminar to hear the findings of the study carried out by Copenhagen Economics on the impact of TTIP on Ireland.
- European Parliament publication on TTIP

Development Cooperation

Irish Aid launched One World, One Future their new policy for International Development in mid-2013. Congress was pleased to see references to decent work in the new policy as requested in our submission. The new policy “strives to ensure economic development compatible with our commitment to decent work and gender equality.”

Congress also wrote to Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore urging the Irish government to support trade union observations on the EU communication Decent Life for All in relation to the post 2015 Development Framework to replace the Millennium Development Goals.

We also expressed disappointment with the absence of any decent work references in the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) Africa Strategy.

Congress successfully liaised with the ITUC regarding the Irish Aid supported project on capacity building for trade unions in Burma/ Myanmar and assistance on preparation for new application to civil society fund which was granted.

Climate Change

This year (2015) is the European Year for Development and a crucial one for our planet with international talks on replacing the Millennium Development Goals and on tackling Climate Change.

We have been coordinating with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in their work to ensure these include goals on decent work and social protection.

In relation to climate change we have been working with a number of other organisations to ensure trade union participation in a series of ‘Climate Conversations’, including inputs from David Begg and ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

Congress Executive Council member, Jack O’Connor represented us at the ITUC Congress in Berlin in June 2014 and at the Biennial engagement between the International Trade Union Congress, the IMF and the World Bank, which took place in Washington, in February 2015.



Caption

Other related work in the period included continued participation in the DFAT NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights, including active participation on the role of human rights (including decent work) in foreign policy. Congress also participated in the preparation of the Galway Platform on Human Rights in Irish Foreign Policy by the Galway Centre for Human Rights at NUIG which fed into the review of Irish Foreign policy, finally published in January 2015. Congress also submitted views to the review.

Business & Human Rights

There was a major focus on the issue of business and human rights during the period, perhaps sparked by the lack of any human rights component in a major Irish government trade delegation visit to the Gulf in 2014.

Following the January controversy regarding the lack of a human rights dimension to the trade mission, Congress wrote to the Taoiseach expressing our concern. The letter concluded that:

“One could draw the conclusion that Ireland’s trade interests are now to trump our human rights commitments. I trust that this is not in fact the case and that the current review of our foreign policy will reiterate such a stance and perhaps begin to develop policy and mechanisms to ensure the integration of our

trade and human rights concerns in future trade delegation visits.”

The Taoiseach responded to our letter, disagreeing with our stance and reiterating the position that trade missions were not the appropriate context for raising human rights issues:

“To be effective in raising human rights issues with other states, it must be in an appropriate way and at the right juncture, so that concerns are taken seriously.”

Later in 2014, the DFAT Human Rights division invited us to propose trade union speakers for their annual Human Rights Forum, the theme of which was Business and Human Rights.

Congress spoke in a workshop at the Forum in November and also arranged for one of the keynote speakers in the plenary, Dwight Justice of the ITUC.

We also submitted views on the development of a national action plan on business and human rights and were invited to speak in a workshop at the DFAT/Chambers Ireland event to discuss the issue.

Available at: http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/congress_sub_on_business_and_human_rights.pdf

Congress also organised a workshop on using the OECD Guidelines for Multinationals: Organising for Decent Work in Multinationals. This took place in November 2013.

It featured inputs from Gerard Monks from the Irish National Contact Point (in DJEI) and Peter Rossman (International Union of Food and Allied Workers) and Kirsty Drew (Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD).

Congress now provides input on an annual basis to the Masters students in the Centre for Human Rights (NUIG) on the theme of Business and Human Rights.

Related activities included:

- Meetings with Primark regarding their ethical purchasing and follow up to Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 and subsequent linking up with UNI and INDUSTRIALL;
- Congress participated in a Clean Clothes Campaign Event to mark the 1st Anniversary of Rana Plaza in Grafton Street April 2014;
- Presented on the need to achieve decent work in the garment industry in Bangladesh at a Comhlamh public debate, in November 2013;
- Input at the Cork Mother Jones Festival 2014 on the labour issues surrounding the proposed world cup to be held in Qatar in 2022. <http://motherjones175.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/programme-2014-6.pdf>
- Participated in consultation by Irish Aid Advisory Group regarding the integration of development and trade promotion agendas. Content broadly based on our submission to the DFAT review of foreign policy, available here: <http://www.ictu.ie/globalsolidarity/newsevents/keyissues/2014/02/10/congress-submission-to-review-of-our-foreign-polic/>

Colombia

Congress continues to focus on the ongoing violation of trade union rights in Colombia, the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist.

A delegation from Congress also visited Colombia in 2014 and subsequently reported to the Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee regarding the situation there: <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committeetakes/FOJ2014102200003?opendocument#B00300>

The report of the delegation visit will be available at BDC 2015.

Unfortunately, the Dail went on to ratify the EU Colombia/Peru Free Trade Agreement in January 2015.

Congress and others have been to the fore in pointing out that this is not in keeping with our international reputation or commitment to human rights. The motion took no cognisance of the recent political contribution by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs Enterprise and Innovation and Congress wrote to Minister Bruton seeking a postponement of the debate.

Justice For Colombia

Work continued between the Congress Justice for Colombia campaign and JFC which resulted in several visits of Colombian trade unionists and activists to Ireland in the period 2013-2014.

In April 2013 activists visited from the Colombian Patriótica Marcha and a series of meetings took place with TDs, senior civil servants from the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) and a North/South parliamentary group.

The visit concluded with a public awareness meeting in Liberty Hall.

A visit took place in October 2013 of the Director and Parliamentary Officer of Justice for Colombia, UK, to discuss strategy, establishing links with Colombian colleagues, fostering deeper relationships with the UK organisation and collaborating on future projects and actions.

A number of meetings were scheduled with the General Secretaries of affiliate trade unions to garner additional support for the campaigns and with politicians, to encourage them to push this issue up the union and political agenda.

A delegation of Colombian activists visited on April 10/11, 2014 and met with Minister Joe Costello and Head of the Latin American Section in DFAT followed by a meeting with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The aim was to highlight the current breaches of human rights in Colombia and to garner international support for the peace process and the inclusion of civil society in that process.

The delegation also attended the Congress New Course Conference in the Mansion House, followed by a public meeting with trade union leaders and activists in the UNITE offices.

A joint delegation to Colombia from Ireland and the UK took place in July 2014. A number of senior Irish Trade Unionists participated in the trip which lasted a week.(See above)

A number of unions - CPSU, IMPACT, PSEU, INTO - continue to support a CPDH [Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights] led project in Colombia on the Legal Consultation and Assistance for Victims belonging to the Colombia Trade Union movement and the CUT trade union confederation.

The aim is to strengthen the capacity of the trade union population through providing legal assistance to union leaders. CPDH provides legal consultation, litigation and accompaniment, to promote equal access to the judicial system.

It is hoped that this project will make an important contribution to the struggle against impunity for human rights violations committed against trade unionists, in Colombia.

The first project which began in 2013 resulted in agreements with different trade unions which means CPDH are able to provide legal cover in a far more systematic fashion.

As a result of this project they are now able to coordinate directly with the individuals responsible for human rights in the different unions, offer legal representation and accompaniment to all of the victims in each union with far greater efficiency. They have also been able to provide the necessary tools to the organisations so that they themselves can defend and promote human rights amongst their members.

The process of systematising and logging the different cases of human rights violations suffered by the different organisations has allowed CPDH to develop more efficient processes for the presentation of legal complaints. It is also extremely useful for monitoring and considering future actions to be taken in search of the rights of the victims from the different unions covered by the agreements.

The project means that trade union victims have been given legal representation in their search for justice and that assaults against trade unionists have been prevented.

It is also important that trade unionists from the agricultural sector who are victims of false legal accusations have been given legal accompaniment in certain cases to expose the false evidence and ensure their freedom.

It was then decided that the project would continue through 2014 and into 2015 and is supported by the same unions in this second phase.

Look at the State of Palestine

In December 2013, the Congress Executive Council was pleased to welcome Mr Mohamed Omara, International Secretary of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) to discuss how we can improve links between our organisations.

Mr Omara (hosted by Sadaka) also participated in a public meeting in Liberty Hall. The then General Secretary David Begg met with the Palestinian Ambassador, Mr Ahmad Abdelrazek, during the period.

Congress was to the fore in condemning the 2014 assault on Gaza by Israeli forces. We urged the Irish Government to take immediate action to help end the bombardment of Gaza, and to take action to "stop Israeli war crimes" and help broker an immediate ceasefire agreement Trade Unions were to the fore in many of the marches that took place across the country at the time.

In a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Charlie Flanagan, TD, Congress General Secretary David Begg, condemned the Israeli action and added that:



“This is the third occasion in five years that the Israeli government has demonstrated to the world that it believes it can act with impunity when it comes to the killing of Palestinian civilians. The collective punishment of a civilian population and the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force against the people of Gaza by the Government of Israel is a profound breach of international humanitarian law.”

Congress is cognisant of the ongoing call from Palestinian civil society for a campaign of Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) against Israel, until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights.

Unless there are consequences for Israel’s actions, history tells us they will continue to flout international law. For that reason, the Executive Council have agreed the broad components of such a campaign and are planning a launch during 2015.

Congress also supported a major Sadaka billboard campaign on Palestinian statehood, that attracted a considerable degree of attention at home and abroad.

On December 10, 2014, Dáil Éireann unanimously passed a motion calling on the Irish government to recognise the state of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Seanad Éireann had passed a similar motion on October 22, 2014, also supported by all political parties. To date the government has failed to act on these motions. Securing international recognition of a Palestinian state is one of the stated priorities of the Palestinian leadership.

The billboard initiative - Look at the State of Palestine - was initiated by Sadaka and implemented with the support of Congress. It was part of an ongoing campaign to secure formal Irish government recognition of a Palestinian state.

This was the first time a comprehensive multimedia public advertisement campaign - featuring maps of ‘disappearing Palestine’ from 1946 to the present day - had been mounted in any European Union member state.

The Sadaka/Congress initiative was groundbreaking in terms of ambition, breadth of coverage and the manner in which it highlighted the Palestinian issue.

The campaign was launched with a photocall outside Leinster House on January 25, 2015 and attracted participation from elected representatives of the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and a number of Independent TDs and Senators. Senior Congress representatives present included John Douglas, President and Joe O'Flynn, General Secretary of SIPTU.

Political participants also included party leaders Gerry Adams and Micheál Martin and former Minister of State at the Dept. Of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Joe Costello.

The Ambassador of Palestine, His Excellency Ahmed Abdelrazek was also in attendance. The campaign was very effective in raising awareness amongst the general population of the devastating effects of Israel's sustained policies of expansionism and land expropriation on Palestine since 1947.

While the maps of disappearing Palestine are commonly used amongst individuals and organisations already informed on the issue of Palestine, this campaign brought them to the wider public. The campaign was also successful in mobilising the general public to exert pressure on the Irish government to recognise the state of Palestine. There can be no doubt where public opinion stands in relation to recognition of the Palestinian state.

Congress also sourced a blog on the issue by well known British diplomat, Vincent Fean, who was formerly posted in Jerusalem: <http://www.ictu.ie/blog/2015/03/18/recognition-of-palestinian-state-good-for-peace-pr/>

Palestine Campaign

Following from a decision of the Executive Council, the Secretariat worked with a designer agency to devise the required components of the BDS campaign. These included: a website, a leaflet and a short animated film for use on websites and social media. The materials were subsequently presented to the Executive Council and unveiled to delegates at the Global Solidarity Summer School in Belfast, in August 2014. The materials were reviewed on foot of legal advice, with a view to launching the campaign later in 2015. A briefing/ training session for affiliate unions will be organised in advance of a launch.

Other human and worker rights' campaigns included:

Congress and Amnesty International Ireland wrote to Park Geun-hye, President of the Republic of Korea, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Kim Jung-woo, who was detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of association. We also called for the government to recognise the right of trade unionists to carry out their work without harassment or arrest, in accordance with international human rights law.

Congress joined with labour rights groups, trade unions and individuals across the world taking action to demand the immediate release of the 23 Cambodian workers detained January 2014 during protests, when garment workers called for a rise in the minimum wage to US\$160.

At this critical juncture, a coalition of Cambodian garment unions has called for international solidarity to support their demands for a rise in the minimum wage. Congress joined with IndustriALL Global Union, the ITUC and UNI Global Union and Cambodian unions in a Day of Action on September 17 (2014) to demand a living wage for garment workers

Reconstituted Global Solidarity Committee

The Committee was reconstituted in October 2014. Mags O'Brien was elected Chairperson and Joan McCrohan vice Chair. The major focus of the work is the promotion of the decent work agenda in Ireland's aid and foreign policy.

During the period this included liaison with Irish Aid re decent work in Post 2015 development agenda: <http://www.ictu.ie/globalsolidarity/newsevents/keyissues/2014/12/18/the-eu-council-conclusions-on-the-role-of-private/> ;

Subgroups on specific issues such as: Qatar and World Cup 2022, 2015 Summer School, Palestine and Colombia were also formed.



Global Solidarity Summer School 2013 (450)

The Global Solidarity Summer School took place at the end of August 2013 on the theme of **100 Years of Lockout: Learning from the Past to Shape the Future**. It was opened by Minister of State for Trade & Development Joe Costello, TD.

Historian Padraig Yeates delivered the the keynote address on Remembering the Dublin Lockout and Assessing its Impact. There were also contributions from John Douglas, Congress President; Peter Rossmann from the IUF; Gordon Ørskov Madsen, Executive Member, Danish Union of Teachers [DLF] and Alex Bukarica, Legal & Industrial Director, CFMEU Australia.

Six workshops also took place as follows:

Global learning and the future of Development Education in Trade Unions

This was facilitated by Ms. Margaret Nolan, Training & Education Consultant; Mr. Frank Geary, Director, IDEA

Repression and Lack of Human Rights in Bahrain

This included invited guest speakers Ms. Rula AlSaffar and Ms Jalila AlSalman, both Bahraini teachers. It was facilitated by Mr. John O'Brien (INTO) and heard from Ms. Tara O'Grady, Ireland/ Bahrain Campaign

Trade unionism in the Middle East: A report by a former Iraqi TU official

Facilitated by Abdullah Muhsin; John Devlin, President NASUWT.

The Financial Transactions tax: Campaigning to change the rules

Facilitated by Dr. Micheál Collins, NERI; Mr. Sorley McCaughey, Christian Aid.

The Sri Lankan Situation: Learning, understanding and acting for human rights

Facilitated by Ms. Joan McCrohan IMPACT; Mr. Logeswaran Sri Lankan campaigner

Post 2015, the Decent Work Agenda & Development

Facilitated by Mr. Hans Zomer, Director Dochas; Mr. David Joyce, Congress.

Global Solidarity Summer School 2014

The 2104 Summer School took place at the end of August 2014 and 95 delegates attended. The theme of was international trade with a particular focus on TTIP. Susan George was the keynote speaker with panel speakers from COSATU, ASTDEMP [Colombia] and NERI. Six workshops took place on topics as follows:

- **TTIPP and public services:** A study of its potential effects
- **Disability & Development:** A case study for inclusion
- **Free Trade Agreements:** The Colombian Case Study
- **Journalists at work:** the challenge of international reporting



Image to be placed here

Caption

■ **Trade & Decent Work:** How compatible are they?

■ **Fairtrade:** The movement and its consideration of decent work

Global Solidarity Survey

A set of three surveys were designed for the Global Solidarity programme to allow us gather information on training, knowledge, work programmes, budgets and the work of affiliates in this area. The aim is identify the impact of past and current programmes and to improve the overall effectiveness of the GS programme. To date, there have been 18 returns representing 13 trade unions involved in this area and this information is now being processed.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - ACCOUNTS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions Income and Expenditure Account

	2014 €	2013 €	2012 €
Income			
Affiliation Fees Income	2,507,263	2,484,525	2,592,352
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	944,000	944,000	944,000
Grant and Project Income	958,219	661,007	623,404
Activities Income	300,710	312,434	22,280
Conference Income	36,934	79,067	31,641
Other Income	50,378	55,665	36,798
Total Income	4,797,504	4,536,698	425,0475
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	2,759,282	2,747,015	2,570,503
Ex-gratia Pensions	86,431	86,431	94,361
Affiliation Fees Costs	186,251	183,159	171,722
Education and Training Costs	782,994	374,621	332,346
Activities Costs	335,826	470,461	355,244
Research and Consulting	25,658	23,789	12,229
Conferences and Meetings	57,115	94,815	43,253
Publications, Printing and Stationery	30,260	30,452	36,362
Grants and Subscriptions	2,247	3,589	2275
Repairs and Renewals	57,358	99,350	14,6267
Leasing of Office Equipment	37,292	45,298	26,305
Motor, Travelling and Subsistence	142,047	88,072	113,476
Insurance	9,063	14,853	15,170
Rent, Rates and Service Charges	27,439	34,479	41,153
Postage and Telephone	34,144	40,715	55,818
Light and Heat	32,785	32,187	26,352
Cleaning and Sundry Items	33,873	37,787	51,129
Legal and Professional fees	45,122	44,528	21,700
Bank Interest and Charges	8,517	8,621	18,198
Loss on Foreign Exchange	13,208	1,491	6078
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset	7,536	-	
Depreciation	70,903	79,033	77,103
Amortisation of Deferred Premises Funding	(33,256)	(33,255)	(33,255)
Total Expenditure	4,752,095	4,507,491	418,3789
Operating surplus for year	45,409	29,207	85,203
Deposit Interest (net of DIRT tax)	5,592	4,824	18,517
Taxation	-	-	-
Surplus for year	51,001	34,031	103,720

Irish Congress of Trade Unions Balance Sheet

	2014 €	2013 €	2012 €
Fixed Assets	2,480,126	2,504,987	2563891
Current Assets			
Bank Balance and Cash	1,181,386	966,404	1115318
Debtors and Prepayments	289,506	200,196	171793
Stock of Stationery	5,034	5,034	5035
	1,475,926	1,171,634	1292146
Less: Current Liabilities			
Bank Loans and Overdrafts	(88,000)	(88,000)	(253,165)
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	(1,936,153)	(1,596,723)	(1,523,749)
	(2,024,153)	(1,684,723)	(1,776,914)
Net Current Liabilities	(548,227)	(513,089)	(484,768)
Creditors: Amounts due after more than 1 year			
Bank loans	(216,309)	(294,053)	(382,053)
	1,715,590	1,697,845	1,697,070
Represented by:			
Accumulated fund	18,173	(32,828)	(66,859)
Other Reserves	600,000	600,000	600,000
	618,173	567,172	533,141
Deferred Premises funding	1,097,417	1,130,673	1,163,929
	1,715,590	1,697,845	1,697,070

Congress Northern Ireland Committee Training & Advisory Account 2012-2014

	2014 €	2013 €	2012 €
Income			
Government Grant Funding	110,595	102,855	140,305
Contributions from TUC & Similar Bodies	2,975	-	-
Contributions from Congress	1,048	-	-
Expenditure			
Salaries and National Insurance	93,333	84,101	90,773
Pension Fund Contributions	-	-	15,000
Shop Steward, Health, Safety & Equality Training	4,365	480	40
Office Running Costs	9,161	11,966	15,000
Travel & Subsistence Expenses	1,653	1,558	913
Audit & Accountancy	2,040	2,070	2,100
Bank Charges & Interest	66	67	42
	114,618	100,242	123,868
Surplus for year	-	2,613	16,437

Congress Northern Ireland Committee Training & Advisory Account Balance Sheet 2012-2014

	2014 €	2013 €	2012 €
Current Assets			
Debtors	140,305	58,205	72,995
Cash at Bank	-	38,198	10,011
	140,305	96,403	83,006
Creditors: Amounts due after more than 1 year	(121,255)	(93,790)	(83,006)
Net Assets	19,050	2,613	-
Represented by:			
Accumulated Surplus	19,050	2,613	-

APPENDIX 2 - EXECUTIVE COUNCIL GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE

The Executive Council held 21 ordinary meetings between July 2013 and May 2015.

The attendances at these meetings were as follows:

Executive Council:

Name	Ordinary
J Douglas (President) (MANDATE)	19
B Campfield (Vice President) (NIPSA)	20
P King (Vice President until April '15) (SIPTU)	19
J O'Flynn (Treasurer) (SIPTU)	18
L Broderick (IBOA)	16
E Buckley (SIPTU)	19
K Callinan (IMPACT)	18
S Cody (IMPACT)	20
C Cronin (LRP)	20
E Devoy (TEEU)	16
S Dooley (NUJ)	18
L Doran (INO)	10
S Fitzpatrick (CWU)	19
T Geraghty (PSEU)	20
A Hall (TEEU)	10
A Hall-Callaghan (UTU)	15
J Kelly (UNITE)	12
P King (ASTI)	19
G Light (MANDATE)	16
J MacGabhann (TUI)	19
J McCamphill (NASUWT)	17
E McGlone (UNITE)	12
P McKeown (UNISON)	14
A Millar (NIPSA)	16
J Moore (UCATT)	18
M Morgan (NIPSA)	14
A Morrissey (MANDTE)	19
P Ní Sheaghdha (INMO)	20
S Nunan (INTO)	19
J O'Connor (SIPTU)	18
L O'Donnell (IMPACT)	16
E Ronayne (CPSU)	20
A Speed (UNISON)	19
D Thomas (AHCPS)	15
N Ward (INTO)	21

General Purposes Committee:

The General Purposes Committee 19 Ordinary meetings and 1 Special meeting, total of 20, between July 2013 and May 2015.

Name	Ordinary	Special	Total
J Douglas (President) (MANDATE)	14	1	15
B Campfield (Vice President) (NIPSA)	17	1	18
P King (Vice President until April '15) (SIPTU)	14	1	15
J O'Flynn (Treasurer) (SIPTU)	17	0	17
S Cody (IMPACT)	19	1	20
S Fitzpatrick (CWU)	16	1	17
S Nunan (INTO)	18	1	19
J O'Connor (SIPTU)	16	1	17
J Kelly (UNITE)	12	1	13

Northern Ireland Committee

The Northern Ireland Committee's Biennial Delegate Conference was held in the City Hotel, Derry on 9th and 10th April 2014 and the following were elected as members of the Committee for 2014-2016:

M Langhammer (ATL), L Graham (BFAWU), J Barbour (FBU), J Dawson (GMB), P McKeown and A Speed (UNISON), M O'Rourke (SIPTU), J Pollock and T Trainor (UNITE), B Campfield, P Mackell and M Morgan, (NIPSA), J McCamphill (NASUWT), G Murphy (INTO), A Hall-Callaghan (UTU), L Huston (CWU), B Lawn (PCS), M Lafferty (USDAW), C Murchan (Newry Trades Council). P Bunting (ICTU)

At its inaugural meeting in April 2014, Jackie Pollock was elected Chair and Maria Morgan as Vice-Chair.

Obituaries

A number of close colleagues of the trade union movement died since BDC 2007, including:

Mr Bob Crowe died in March, 2014 as serving General Secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.

Mr Charlie Douglas, former Republic of Ireland Secretary of the ATGWU and Executive Member of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions, died in February 2014.

Mr Christy Kirwan, Retired General Secretary of SIPTU and former President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions died in November 2013.

Mr Owen Curran Retired General Secretary of the Irish Print Group, died in May, 2014.

Mr Noel Harris, former National Secretary of ASTMS in Dublin and Executive Member of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Ms Karen Simms, NASUWT Northern Ireland Organiser and member of the Northern Ireland Committee ICTU, the ICTU Women's Committee and the ICTU Education Trade Union Group, died in September 2014.

Mr Tom Bough, former President of Cork Council of Trade Unions, died in April, 2014.

Mr Tom McKee, former Northern Ireland Secretary of NASUWT, died in March, 2014.

Mr Terry Quinlan, former General Secretary of the Post Office Workers Union, died in April, 2015

On behalf of the Executive Council Congress wishes to extend its deepest sympathies to the families of those deceased.

APPENDIX 3 - AFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP

Unions affiliated to Congress 2015
(Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2014)

RO = Regional Officer
R = Republic of Ireland
NI = Northern Ireland
HO = Head Office
GS = General Secretary
IR = Irish Representative
DO = Divisional Organiser/Officer
W = Women
PO = Policy Officer
NO = National Organiser
SS = Scottish Secretary

IS = Irish Secretary
P = President
NS = National Secretary
RS = Regional Secretary
JGS = Joint General Secretary
NO = National Official
HC = Honorary Chairperson
CEO = Chief Executive Officer
SNO = Senior Negotiating Officer
AS = Area Secretary
NIO = Northern Ireland Officer

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants	R	3,450	GS	Ciaran Rohan Flemings Hall, 12 Flemings Place, Dublin 4 Telephone: 01-6686077 / 6686064 Fax: 01 - 668 6380 crohan@ahcps.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	3,450		
	W R	1,035		
Association of Irish Traditional Musicians	R	168	GS	Tomás Ó'Maoldomhnaigh 32 Cearnóg Belgrave Square, Monkstown, Co. Dublin Telephone: 01-2800295 Fax: 01 -2803759 eolas@comhaltas.ie
	NI	12		
	Total	180		
	W	79		
	WNI	3		
Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland	R	17,807	GS	Pat King ASTI, Thomas McDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01 - 6040160 Fax: 01- 8972760 patk@asti.ie info@asti.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	17,807		
	W R	12,497		
Association of Teachers and Lecturers	R	0	GS	Mary Bousted, 7 Northumberland St., London WC2N 5RD Telephone: 0044 2079306441 info@atl.org.uk
	NI	2,206		
	Total	2,206		
	W NI	1,570	IR	
				Mark Langhammer: Unit 16, 5 Westbank Drive Westbank Drive Belfast BT3 9DS Telephone: 0044 289078 2020 mlanghammer@atl.org.uk

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union	R	360	GS	Ronnie Draper Stanborough House, Great North Road, Stanborough, Welwyn Gardens City, Hertfordshire AL8 7TA Telephone: 0044 1707 260 150 Fax: 0044 1707 261 570 Ronnie.draper@bfawu.org
	NI	710		
	Total	1,070		
	W R	43		
	W NI	350		
			NI	Laura Graham 1st & 2nd floor, 157 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast BT5 5AB Telephone: 048 90454242 Fax: 048 90451554 laura.graham@bfawu.org
Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematography and Theatre Union	R	48	GS	Gerry Morrissey 373-377 Clapham Road, London SW9 9BT Telephone: 0044 2073460900 Fax: 0044 2073460901 dlockwood@bectu.org.uk
	NI	427		
	Total	475		
	W R	13		
	W NI	152		
			NO	Dan Cooke 373-377 Clapham Road, London SW9 9BT Telephone: 0044 2073460900 dcooke@bectu.org.uk
Building and Allied Trades Union	R	1,600	GS	Brendan O'Sullivan Arus Hibernia, 13 Blessington Street Dublin 7 Telephone: 01- 8301911 / 8301280 union@batu.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	1,600		
	W R	1		
	W NI	0		
Civil and Public Service Union	R	13,775	GS	Eoin Ronayne CPSU, 19/20 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 Telephone: 01-6765394/661 Fax: 01 – 676 2918 jmooney@cpsu.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	13,775		
	W R	12,976		
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	R	0	GS	Claire Sullivan 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R4ED Telephone: 0044 2073066666 Fax: 0044 2890 447 110 sullivanc@csp.org.uk
	NI	965		
	Total	965		
	WR	0		
	WNI	932		
			PO	Tom Sullivan (CSP Policy Officer for NI) Arthur House, 41 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GB Telephone: 0044 2890 446 249 sullivant@csp.org.uk0

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Communications Workers' Union	R NI Total	18,200 0 18,200	GS	Stephen Fitzpatrick William Norton House , 575 North Circular Road, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8663000 Fax: 01: 8663099 stevie@cwu.ie
	W R	2,956		
Communication Workers Union (UK)	R NI Total	0 4,815 4,815	GS	Billy Hayes CWU, 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RX Telephone: 0044 2089717251 bhayes@cwu.org
	W NI	860	RS	Lawrence C Huston, CWU Regional Centre, 1st Floor Unite Buildings, 26-34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT152AA Telephone: 0044 2890321771 l.huston@btinternet.com
EQUITY	R NI Total	0 397 397	GS	Christine Payne Guild House, Upper St. Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EG Telephone: 0044 2073796000 Fax: 0044 207 379 7001 info@equity.org.uk
	W R WNI	0 203	NO	Drew McFarlane 114 Union Street, Glasgow, G13QQ Telephone: 00441412482472 Fax: 0044 141 248 2473 dmcfarlane@equity.org.uk
Energy Services Union (of Ireland)	R NI Total	1,309 0 1,309	GS	Fran O' Neill 43 East James's Place, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2 Telephone: 01-6767444 adminaccounts@esu.ie
	W R	799		
Fire Brigades' Union	R NI Total	0 1,705 1,705	GS	Matt Wrack Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE Telephone: 0044 2085411765 Fax: 0044 208 546 5187 office@fbu.org.uk
	WNI	77	RS	Stephen Boyd 14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT28 1XJ Telephone: 0044 2892664622 Mobile: 0044 7879671837 Stephen.boyd@fbu.org.uk

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
First Division Civil Servants (FDA)	R NI Total	0 313 313	GS	Dave Penman 8 Leake Street, London SE1 7NN Telephone: 0044 2074015555 emma@fda.org.uk
	WNI	148	SS/ NI	Jim Caldwell (Scottish Secretary & Northern Ireland Secretary) 104a Titchfield Street Kilmarnock KA1 1PH Scotland Mobile: 00447967126778 jim@fda.org.uk
GMB	R NI Total	127 12,037 12,164	GS	Paul Kenny 22 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD Telephone: 0044 2073916700 Fax: 0044 208 944 6552 paul.kenny@gmb.org.uk
	WR WNI	31 5,784	IR	David Kearney Shamari, 4 Redhills Park, Ellistown, Co. Kildare Telephone: 0873291300 davidseerykearney@eircom.net
Guinness Staff Union	R NI Total	442 0 442	GS	Sean Mackell 107 James's Street, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01- 643 5484 Fax: 01 - 677 0019 sean.mackell@diageo.com
	W R	190		
Irish Bank Officials' Association	R NI Total	14,604 4,946 19,550	GS	Larry Broderick IBOA House, Stephen Street Upper, Dublin 8 Telephone: 01-475 5908 Fax: 01 - 4780567 larry.broderick@iboa.ie
	W R W NI	10,689 3,543		
Irish Federation of University Teachers	R NI Total	2,248 0 2,248	GS	Mike Jennings 11 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 Telephone: 01- 661 0910 Fax: 01 - 6610909 generalsecretary@ifut.ie
	W R	1,047		
Irish Medical Organisation	R NI Total	3,980 0 3,980	GS	Steve Tweed 10 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2 Telephone: 01- 676 7273 Fax: 01- 6612758 mdevlin@imo.ie
	W R W NI	1,775 0		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union	R	63,566	GS	Shay Cody Nerney's Court, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-817 1500 Fax: 01 -8171501 info@impact.ie
	NI	60		
	Total	63,626		
	W R W NI	44,496 42		
Irish National Teachers' Organisation	R	32,925	GS	Sheila Nunan 35 Parnell Square, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01 8047700 Fax: 01 8722462 info@into.ie
	NI	7,000		
	Total	39,925		
	W R W NI	28,292 5,430		
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation	R	39,150	GS	Liam Doran The Whitworth Building, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 Telephone: 01 - 6640626 Fax: 01 - 661 0466 liam@inmo.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	39,150		
	W R	37,872		
MANDATE	R	40,286	GS	John Douglas O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1 Telephone: 874 6321 Fax: 01-8729581 johndouglas@mandate.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	40,286		
	W R	30,200		
Medical Laboratory Scientists Association	R	1,561	GS	Terry Casey 4th Floor, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01 - 8586472 Fax :01- 8780085 tcasey@siptu.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	1,561		
	W R	1,235		
National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers	R	0	GS	Chris Keates, Hillscourt Education Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham B458RS Telephone: 0044121 453 6150 nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
	NI	12,875		
	Total	12,875		
	W R	0	NO	Justin McCamphill Ben Madigan House, Edgewater Office Park, Edgewater Road, Belfast BT 3 9JQ Telephone: 0044 289 0784480 Justin.mccamphill@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
	W NI	9,394		

Name of Union		Number of Members	General Secretary/Address	
National Union of Journalists	R	2,599	GS	Michelle Stanistreet 308 – 312 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP Telephone: 0044 207 843 3746 michelles@nuj.org.uk
	NI	774		
	Total	3,373		
	W R	957	IS	
	W NI	284		Seamus Dooley 2nd Floor, Spencer House, Spencer Row, Off Store Street, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01- 8170340 Fax: 01 – 8170359 seamusd@nuj.ie info@nuj.ie
National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT)		13	GS	Mick Cash Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD Telephone: 0044 2075298287 Fax: 0044 207387 4123 j.croy@rmt.org.uk
		97		
		110		
		6	RO	
		5		Michael Hogg 180 Hope Street, Glasgow Lanarkshire, G2 2UE, Scotland Telephone: 0044 141 332 1117 m.hogg@rmt.org.uk
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance		0	GS	Brian Campfield Harkin House, 54 Wellington Park, Belfast BT9 6DP Telephone: 048 - 9066 1831 Fax: 048 - 9066 5847 Brian.campfield@nipsa.org.uk info@nipsa.org.uk
		45,200		
		45,200		
		30,483		
Operative Plasterers and Allied Trades Society of Ireland		803	GS	Billy Wall 9/13 Blackhall Place, Stoneybatter, Dublin 7 Telephone: 01-7994519 Fax: 01-7994501 info@opatsi.ie
		0		
		803		
		1		
Prison Officers' Association		3,153	GS	John Clinton 18 Merrion Square Dublin 2 Telephone: 01-6625495 Fax: 01 - 6678563 admin@poa.ie
		0		
		3,153		
		651		
Prison Officers' Association Northern Ireland		0	GS	Steve Gillan Cronin House, 245 Church Street, Edmonton, London N9 9HW Telephone: 0044 20 8803 0255 gs@poauk.org.uk
		1,133		
		1,133		
		392	AS	
				June Robinson Castelle House, 116 Ballywalter Road, Millisle, Co Down BT22 2HS Telephone: 04891 861928 adminni@poauk.org.uk

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Prospect	R	10	GS	Mike Clancy 8 Leake Street London SE1 7NN Telephone: 0044 20 7902 6691 Fax: 0044 2079 026667 caitlin.kinsella@prospect.org.uk
	NI	1,648		
	Total	1,658		
	W R	1		
	W NI	380	NI	Philip O’Rawe 3rd Floor, 5 Lanyon Place, Belfast BT1 3BT Telephone: 048 9004 2083 philip.orawe@prospect.org.uk
Public Service Executive Union	R	12,000	GS	Tom Geraghty 30 Merrion Square, Dublin 2 Telephone: 01-676 7271 Fax: 01 - 6615777 tgeraghty@pseu.ie info@pseu.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	12,000		
	W R	6,500		
Public and Commercial Services	R	0	GS	Mark Serwotka 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN Telephone: 0044 2079242727 Fax: 0044 2079241847 mark@pcs.org.uk
	NI	1,926		
	Total	1,926		
	WR	0		
	WNI	1,106	SS	Lynn Henderson 145 West Regent Street, Glasgow G2 2SG Telephone: 0044 141 225 5150 Fax: 0044 141 221 4065 LYNNH@pcs.org.uk
Services Industrial Professional Technical Union	R	199,881	GS	Joe O’Flynn Liberty Hall, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01- 8586300 Fax: 01 - 8749466 gensec@siptu.ie
	NI	7,000		
	Total	206,881		
	W R	77,580		
	W NI	3,000		
Teachers’ Union of Ireland	R	16,300	GS	John MacGabhann 73 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6 Telephone: 01 - 4922588 Fax: 01 - 4922953 mmalone@tui.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	16,300		
	W R	10,269		
Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union	R	39,000	GS	Eamon Devoy 6 Gardiner Row, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-8747047 Fax: 01-8747048 info@teeu.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	39,000		
	W R	123		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Transport Salaried Staffs' Association	R NI Total	743 318 1,061	GS	Manuel Cortes TSSA Walken House, 10 Melton Street Euston, London NW1 2EJ Telephone: 0044 2073872101 Fax: 0044 141 332 9879 enquiries@tssa.org.uk
	W R W NI	208 64	IR	Patrick McCusker, Senior Irish Organiser TSSA, Nerney's Court, Off Temple Street, Dublin 1 Telephone: 0876503658 mccuskerp@tssa.org.uk
UNITE	R NI Total	23,100 36,750 59,850	GS	Len McCluskey 128 Theobald's Road Holborn London WC1X 8TN Telephone: 0207 6112680 Fax: 020 7611 2555 Mohan.arunachalam@unitetheunion.org
	W R W NI	8,063 8,179	RS	Jimmy Kelly 26-34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AA Telephone: 048 90232381 Jimmy.kelly@unitetheunion.org UNITE the Union 55/56 Middle Abbey Street Dublin 1 Telephone: 01 873 4577/6611063 Fax: 01 873 4602/6611738
University & College Union	R NI Total	0 3,480 3,480	GS	Sally Hunt Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH Telephone: 0044 207 756 2500 Fax: 0044 207756 2501 shunt@ucu.org.uk
	W NI	1,834	NIO	Katharine Clarke 94 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5HP Telephone: 048 90665501 Fax: 048 90669225 kclarke@ucu.org.uk
Ulster Teachers' Union	R NI Total	52 6,036 6,088	GS	Avril Hall-Callaghan 94 Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5HP Telephone: 048 90662216 Fax: 048 289068 3296 office@utu.edu
	W R W NI	42 5,114		

Name of Union		Number of Members		General Secretary/Address
Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians	R	9,150	GS	Steve Murphy 177 Abbeville Road, Clapham London SW4 9RL Telephone: 0044 207 622 2442 Fax: 0044 207 720 4081 info@ucatt.org.uk
	NI	900		
	Total	10,050		
	W R	0	NS	
	W NI	90		Jim Moore 56 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1 Telephone: 01-873 1599 Fax: 01 – 873 1403 info@ucatt.ie
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers	R	0	GS	John Hannett 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ Telephone: 0044 161 224 2804/249 2400 Fax : 0044 161 257 2566 enquiries@usdaw.org.uk
	NI	17,236		
	Total	17,236		
	W NI	9,460	IR	
				Michala Lafferty First Floor, Unit 2, 41 Stockmans Way, Belfast BT9 7ET Telephone: 048 90663773 Fax: 048 9066 2133 Michala.lafferty@usdaw.org.uk
UNISON	R	0	GS	Dave Prentis Unison Centre 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY Telephone: 0044 207 1215528 Fax: 0044 207 1215184 policy@unison.co.uk
	NI	35,750		
	Total	35,750		
	W R	0		
	W NI	32,247	IR	
				Patricia McKeown Galway House 165 York Street, Belfast BT15 1AL Telephone: 048 90270190 Fax: 048 903 27929 p.mckeown@unison.co.uk
Veterinary Ireland	R	1,194	GS	Finbarr Murphy 13, The Courtyard Kilcarbery Park Nagor Road Dublin 22 Telephone: 01-457 7976 Email: hq@vetireland.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	1,194		
	W	305		
Veterinary Officers' Association	R	249	P	Mary Courtney Fleming's Hall 12 Fleming's Place Dublin 4 Telephone: 01-668 6077/ 668 6064 Email: mary.courtney@agriculture.gov.ie
	NI	0		
	Total	249		
	W	64		

**Unions with Associate Status affiliated to Congress 2015
(Membership figures in respect of 31 December 2014)**

Name of Union		Number of Members	Contact/Address
Aegis The Union	R	0	HO Brian Linn General Secretary Aegis The Union Aegon, Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh EH12 9SE Telephone: 0044 1315495767 Email: brian.linn@aegistheunion.co.uk
	NI	116	
	Total	116	
	WR	0	
	WNI	73	
British Dietetic Association	R	98	HO Denis Edmondson 5th Floor, Charles House 148/9 Great Charles Street Queensway, Birmingham B3 3HT Telephone: 00441212008021 Email: tusecretary@bda.uk.com
	NI	372	
	Total	480	
	WR	98	
	WNI	368	
Community	R	0	HO Roy Rickhuss General Secretary Community 465c Caledonian Road Lower Halloway, London N7 9GX Telephone: 0044 2074204031 Email: rrickhuss@community-tu.org
	NI	150	
	Total	150	
	W R	0	
	WNI	75	
Hospital Consultants and Specialist Association	R	0	HO Mr Eddie Saville General Secretary 1 Kingsclere Road Overton Basingstoke, Hants RG25 3JA Telephone: 00441256 771777 Email: ebom@hcsa.com
	NI	132	
	Total	132	
	WR	0	
	WNI	31	
National Association of Head Teachers N1 (NAHT)	R	0	HO Russell Hobby General Secretary NAHT Carnmoney House Edgewater office Park Belfast BT3 9JQ Telephone: 0044 2890776633 Email: nahtni@naht.org.uk
	NI	650	
	Total	650	
	WR	0	
	WNI	378	
The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists	R	145	HO Ms Joanna Brown General Secretary 1 Fellmongers Path Tower Bridge Road London SE1 3LY Telephone: 0044 2072348620 Email: bh@scpod.org
	NI	443	
	Total	588	
	WR	106	
	WNI	335	

Affiliations to Congress

Currently there are 47 unions affiliated to Congress and 6 Associate Members.

AFFILIATED TO CONGRESS 2015

Athlone Council of Trade Unions

Denis Rohan
Secretary
IMPACT Trade Union
23/24 Mulvoy Business Park
Mulvoy Road
Galway
Telephone: 091 778030/1
Mobile: 087 6308357
Email: drohan@impact.ie

Ballina and District Council of Trade Unions

Matt Farrell
Chairman
Laughty
Ballina
Co. Mayo
Mobile: 087 261 7167
Email: mattgfarrell@gmail.com

Belfast and District Trades Council

Kevin Doherty
Secretary
c/o ICTU
4-6 Donegall Street Place
BELFAST
BT1 2FN
Telephone: 00442890 247940
Email: Kevin.doherty@ictuni.org

Bray and District Council of Trade Unions

Kieron Connolly
Secretary
58 Fairyhill
Bray
Co Wicklow
Mobile: 087 234 1555
Email: kconnolly@siptu.ie

Castlebar and District Trades Council

Lucy Cunningham (Acting Secretary)
c/o Centre for the Unemployed
Tucker Street
Castlebar
Telephone: 094 9027684
Email: ctucastlebar@gmail.com

Causeway Trade Union Council

Rodger Doherty
Secretary
45 Laurel Mount Road
Coleraine
Co Londonderry
Northern Ireland BT51 3BA
Mobile: 00447772191936
Email: rodger.doherty@orange.net

Clare Council of Trade Unions

Sinead Wynne
IMPACT Regional Officer
Roxborough Road
Limerick
Mobile: 0872297798
Email: swynne@impact.ie

Clonmel Trades and Labour Council

Aileen Atcheston
Secretary
15 Bolton Street
Clonmel
Co Tipperary
Telephone: 052 61 21818
No email

Cork Council of Trade Unions

Sharon Cregan
Hon Secretary/ organiser
c/o SIPTU
Connolly Hall
Lapps Quay
Cork
Telephone: 021 4277466
Mobile: 087 0511219
Email: scregan@siptu.ie

Craigavon Trades Council

Dooley Harte
Secretary
13 The Brambles
Craigavon
Co Armagh
BT66 6LP
Tel: 07793782465
Email: Dooley.harte@nipsa.org.uk

Derry Trades Union Council

Liam Gallagher
Secretary
35 Marlborough Road
Derry BT48 9BH, N Ireland
Telephone: 00447999774334
Email: liam.gallagher@nwrc.ac.uk

Drogheda Council of Trade Unions

Frank Gallagher
Secretary
40 New Field
Drogheda
Co. Louth
Mobile: 087 6650885
Email: frankgallagher40@yahoo.co.uk

Dublin Council of Trade Unions

Sam Nolan
Secretary
194 Ballymun Road
Dublin 9
Email: Eric Fleming
Mobile: 0872856554
efleming@siptu.ie

Dundalk Council of Trade Unions

Frank O'Brien
Secretary
30 Clanbrassil Street
Dundalk
Email: lfobrien@iol.ie
Mobile: 087 279 7798

Fermanagh Trades Union Council

Mairead Stewart
Secretary
114 Windmill Heights
Enniskillen
Co. Fermanagh
Telephone: 0044 28 66323938
Email: k.stewart01@btinternet.com

Galway Council of Trade Unions

Mary Gibbons
Secretary
54 Tirellan Heights, Headford Road
Galway
Mobile: 0879223150
Emails: mary.gibbons11@gmail.com

Kildare Council of Trade Unions

Miriam Hamilton
Secretary
c/o SIPTU
Liberty Hall
Dublin 1
Mobile: 087 6290336
Email: mhamilton@siptu.ie

Killarney Trades Union Council

Tom Murphy
Secretary
c/o Resource Centre
8 College Street
Killarney
Co Kerry
Telephone: 064 6636863
Email: coordinator.killarney@congresscentres.net

Letterkenny & District Trades Union Council

Charlie Kelly
Secretary
Congress Resource Centre
Pearse Road
Letterkenny
Co Donegal
Telephone: 0749128010
Email: cfkelly@eircom.net

Limerick Council of Trade Unions

Mr Mike McNamara
President
Mechanics Institute
Hartstonge Street
Limerick
Co. Limerick
Mobile: 0874129789
Email: m.mcnamara@batu.ie

Lisburn Trades Council

Mr Paul Wolfe
Secretary
34 Trench Road
Hillsborough
BT26 6JL
Northern Ireland
Mobile: 0044 7810691836
Email: lisburntradescouncil@gmail.com

Mid – Ulster Trades Union Council

Mr Harry Hutchinson
Secretary
c/o 64 Ballygrooby Road
Money more
Co.Derry BT457XD
Telephone: 0044 7909530232
Harry_hutchinson2004@hotmail.com

Co. Monaghan Trade Union Council

Peter McAleer
Secretary
11 Cherry Park
Clones
Monaghan
Telephone: 047 52041
Email: Petermcaleer05@eircom.net

Newry & District Trades Union Council

Philip Renshaw
Secretary
21 Willow Grove
Banbridge
Co Down BT32 4RF
Telephone: 0044 7742627948
Email: renshphil@aol.com

North Down and Ards Trades Council

Janette McNulty
Secretary
9 Cranley Gardens
Bangor Co. Down BT19 7EZ
Telephone: 07876210928
Email: janette.mcnulty@deni.gov.uk

Omagh Council of Trade Unions

Anton McCabe
Secreatry
7 Sunningdale
Omagh BT78 1JX
Telephone: 0044 – 7713416234/ 048 82250133
Email: omaghtradescouncil@fastmail.fm

Sligo Council of Trade Unions

Hugh MacConville
Chairman
Carnadough Strand Hill
Co. Sligo
Mobile: 0879564328/0872441270
Email: hughmacconville@gmail.com

Strabane Trades Council

Michael McLaughlin
Secretary
7 Casement Place
Strabane
Co.Tyrone
Email: satuc@gmail.com

Tralee Council of Trade Unions

Con Casey
Secretary
Connolly Hall
Upper Rock Street
Tralee
Co. Kerry
Telephone: 066 7171244
Mobile: 087 9728830
Email: ccasey@siptu.ie

Waterford Council of Trade Unions

Tom Hogan
Secretary
30 Crescent Drive
Hillview Estate
Waterford
Telephone: 051373243
Email: tommyhogan@iolfree.ie

Wexford Council of Trade Unions

Michael Wall
Secretary
O'Leary Road
Coolcotts
Wexford
Telephone: 053 9146774
Email wexcountu@gmail.com

CONGRESS CENTRE NETWORKS

Dr. Steven's Resource Centre,

1st Floor, Block A, Irishtown Central,
Athlone, Co Westmeath.
Co-ordinator: Bernie Mannion,
phone: 090 647 3001, fax: 090 647 8291
e-mail: drstevensresourcecentre@eircom.net

Athy Resource Centre, The Manse,

Woodstock Street, Athy, Co. Kildare
Co-ordinator Mary Maguire
phone: 059 863 8523, fax: 059 863 1445
e-mail: athyresourcecentre@eircom.net

Ballina Centre for the Unemployed ,

Teeling Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Co-ordinators Lucy Cunningham and Deirdre Carroll,
phone: 096 70885,
e-mails: coordinator.mayo@congresscentres.net
cfuballina@eircom.net

Belfast Resource Centre,

45-47 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG
Co-ordinator Aisling Cartmill,
phone: 04890 961111, fax: 04890 961110
e-mail: aisling.cartmill@burc.org
coordinator.belfast@congresscentres.net

Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed,

1-2a Corduff Shopping Centre, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
Co-ordinator John Fitzpatrick
phone : 01-821 0558
e-mail : taxis@eircom.net
dublintaxis@gmail.com

Caherciveen Congress Information Centre,

3 New Street, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry
Co-ordinator Mike Morris,
phone: 066 947 2866, fax: 066 947 2123
e-mail: coinfcetre@gmail.com

Castlebar Centre for the Unemployed,

Tucker Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Co-ordinators Lucy Cunningham and Deirdre Carroll,
phone: 094 902 7684, fax: 094 902 7684
e-mails: coordinator.mayo@congresscentres.net
cfucastlebar@eircom.net
website www.mayocentrefortheunemployed.com

Congress Information & Opportunity Centre,

Unit 7A, Elevation Business Park,
Clonroad, Ennis, Co. Clare
Co-ordinator Andrea Lynch
phone: 065 684 1009, fax: 065 684 2132
e-mail: coordinator.clare@congresscentres.net

Drogheda Resource Centre,

7 North Quay, Drogheda, Co. Louth
Co-ordinators Jacqui Taaffe and Bernadette Dowd,
phone: 041 983 5754, fax: 041 983 9064
e-mail: bernadettedowd@yahoo.ie

Dublin 12 Congress Centre,

New Grange House, 390 Clonard Road,
Crumlin, Dublin 12
Co-ordinator Margaret Fitzpatrick,
phone: 01 492 6797, fax: 01 492 6781
e-mail: coordinator.dublin12@congresscentres.net
dublin12centre@congresscentres.net

Dundalk People's Centre for Information & Training,

30 Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Co-ordinator Eileen Doohan,
phone: 042-933 8820, fax: 042 933 0696
email: supervisor@drcu.ie

The Fingal Centre,

5 Cardiffsbridge Road, Finglas, Dublin 11
Co-ordinator Marie McCann
phone: 01 884 5228, fax: 01 884 5226
e-mail: director@thefingalcentre.ie

Galway People's Resource Centre,

St Clare's Walk, Merchant Road, Galway
Co-ordinator Margaret Cullinane
phone: 091 564822, fax: 091 566758
e-mail: Margaret.cullinane@gprc.ie
Website: www.gprc.ie

Noreside Resource Centre,

3 St. Canice's Court, Dean Street, Kilkenny
Co-ordinator Yvonne Moriarty,
phone: 056 776 2146 – 056 7770790, fax: 056 776 1580
e-mail: noresideresourcecentre@gmail.com

Killarney Resource & Information Centre,

8 College Street, Killarney, Co. Kerry
Co-ordinator Tom Murphy
phone: 064 6636863, fax: 064 36876
e-mail: coordinator.killarney@congresscentres.net

Leixlip Resource Centre,

Unit 3, Leixlip Shopping Mall, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
Co-ordinator Pam Fleming
phone: 01 624 2511, fax: 01 624 6492,
e-mail: leixlipresourcecentre@eircom.net
coordinator.leixlip@congresscentres.net

Congress Resource Centre Letterkenny,

Celtic Apartments, Pearse Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Co-ordinator Marie Slevin
phone: 074 912 8010, fax: 074 912 9491
e-mail: marievslevin@hotmail.com

Limerick Resource Centre for the Unemployed,

9 Cecil Street, Limerick
Co-ordinator Pdraig Malone
phone: 061 312718, fax: 061 411696
e-mail : coordinator.limerick@congresscentres.net
lrcu@eircom.net

**Employment Development & Information Centre,
Longford, 11a 2 Mastertech Business Park,**

Athlone Road, Longford
Co-ordinator Mary Smith,
phone: 043 33 47515, fax: 043 33 48823
e-mail: coordinator.longford@congresscentres.net
www.edilongford.ie

Mary Guihen, First Rung Services,

Arigna, Co Roscommon
Mobile: 085-137 6500
Email: mary.guihen@gmail.com

Mullingar Congress Information & Development Centre,

Unit B, Harbour Court, Friars Mill Road,
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Co-ordinator Susan Bray
phone: 044 9345060, fax: 044 9345675
e-mail: coordinator.mullingar@congresscentres.net
siobainb@hotmail.com
Website: www.mullingarcongress.com

Newbridge Resource Centre,

Lower Eyre Street, Droichead Nua, Co. Kildare
Co-ordinator Theresa Whelan
phone: 045 432763, fax: 045 433275
e-mail: coordinator.newbridge@congresscentres.net twc1@eircom.net

North Leitrim Resource Centre,

New Line, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim
Co-ordinator Gerry Cornyn
phone: 071 985 6029, fax: 071 985 6185
e-mail: coordinator.northleitrim@congresscentres.net

Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed,

St Dominick's Hall, Main Street, Tallaght, Dublin 24
Co-ordinator Marilyn Moralee
phone: 01-451 2983
e-mail : tcuinfo@eircom.net

Congress Employment Information Centre, Tralee,

Milk Market Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Co-ordinator Marilyn Bulman,
phone: 066 712 7617, fax: 066 712 7920
e-mail: tralee@congresscentres.net

Wicklow Trade Union Centre,

97 (rear) Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Co-ordinator Patricia Shortt
phone: 01 286 6730, fax: 01 282 9276
e-mail: coordinator.bray@congresscentres.net

APPENDIX 4 - STAFF AT CONGRESS 2015

Staff at Congress (as of May 2015)

Head Office, 31/32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

(Telephone: 01 8897777 Fax: 01 8872012)

Northern Ireland Office, Carlin House,
4-6 Donegall Street Place, Belfast BT12FN.
(Telephone: 048 90247940)

Congress Head Office

General Secretary – Patricia King

Assistant General Secretary – Sally Anne Kinahan

Assistant General Secretary – Peter Bunting
(Northern Ireland Office)

Programme Manager General Secretary's Office –
Eileen Sweeney

Industrial Officer – Public Sector – Liam Berney

Industrial Officer/Social Affairs Officer – Peter Rigney

Industrial Officer – Private Sector – Fergus Whelan

Legislative/Legal Affairs Officer – Esther Lynch

Communications Officer – Macdara Doyle

Programme Manager AGS Office, HR & Communications –
Deidre Mannion

Equality Officer/Developmental Officer/Global Solidarity
Officer – David Joyce

Programme Manager – Cork Project/UnionConnect/
YouthConnect – Fiona Dunne

Director of Union Learning – Frank Vaughan

Programme Manager DACT/Congress Centres Network –
Sylvia Ryan

Project Manager Momentum – Joanne Browne

Finance Officer – Pat Quinn

Project Assistant – Noreen Moloney

Administrative Staff

Natalie Fox

Louisa Gavin

Catherine McLoughlin

Pauline Corr (Temporary)

Trisha Ellis (Part Time)

Vivien McDonnell (Temporary)

Northern Ireland Office

Equality & Social Affairs Officer – Clare Moore

Union Services Officer, Communications & Policy –
John O'Farrell

Union Services Officer NI – Kevin Doherty

Project Worker NI – Kasia Garbal

Finance & Programme Manager – Gillian Belch

Administrative Union Learning & Development Officer –
Julie Gorman

Administrative Assistant – Eileen Gorman

Administrative Assistant – Tony Gallagher

Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI)

Director – Tom Healy

Senior Research Officer – Micheál Collins

Researcher – Tom McDonnell

Researcher (Belfast Office) – Paul MacFlynn

Research and Administrative Assistant – Daragh McCarthy

Research Officer (Temporary) – Aoife Ni Lochlainn

Congress Secretariat Changes

Left Congress

Left Congress	Date
David Begg (Retired)	March 2015
Fiona Elward	May 2014
Athena Kelly	November 2014
Cliona O'Connell	May 2015
Rory O'Farrell	July 2014

Joined Congress

Joined Congress	Date
Trisha Ellis	March 2014
Noreen Moloney	May 2014
Vivien McDonnell	November 2014
Tony Gallagher	December 2014

On behalf of the Executive Council, Congress wishes to extend best wishes to those who have left or joined Congress since BDC 2013.

APPENDIX 5 - MEMBERSHIP OF CONGRESS COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL BODIES

Appeals Board

E Buckley (SIPTU), J Dawson (GMB), A Hall (TEEU),
J Moore (UCATT), L O'Donnell (IMPACT).

Black & Minority Ethnic Committee

A Hallam (SIPTU), A Ambatt (UNISON), J Reid (UTU),
J Mackay (UNITE), J Doherty (FBU), J Gonsalves (UNITE),
P Gray (NIPSA), S Brown (UTU), SP Conlon (NIPSA),
U Herdman (INTO).

Community Sector Committee

B Byrne (UNITE), K Callinan (IMPACT), A Connolly
(IMPACT), D Connolly (SIPTU), S Curran (IMPACT),
C Darley (UNITE), D Doolan (UNITE), T Erbsloh (UNITE),
S Griffin (SIPTU), E Harvey (SIPTU), C Keane (UNITE),
C Martin (UNITE), J McCarthy (IMPACT), H McNeill
(SIPTU), P Moran (SIPTU), S Muldowney (SIPTU),
E Mullins (SIPTU), G O'Brien (IMPACT), D O'Connor
(SIPTU), J O'Connor (IMPACT), P O'Connor (SIPTU),
D O'Leary (SIPTU), E Penrose (IMPACT), P Quinn
(IMPACT), T Quinn (SIPTU), E Ryan (IMPACT), S Ryan
(Congress), L Scully (SIPTU).

Construction Industry Committee

A Connolly (BATU), J Coughlan (SIPTU), K Deegan
(BATU), E Devoy (TEEU), T Faulkner (UCATT), G Fitzpatrick
(TEEU), T Fitzgerald (UNITE), P Guilfoyle (TEEU), R Kelly
(UNITE), D Lane (SIPTU), B O'Sullivan (BATU), G Macken
(BATU), P McCabe (SIPTU), M McElligott (SIPTU),
P McGrath (SIPTU), M McNamara, M Meere (SIPTU),
J Moore (UCATT), E Morris (BATU), B Murphy (OPATSI),
B Nolan (TEEU), M Quinn (SIPTU), O Reidy (SIPTU),
J Sheridan (SIPTU), A Smith (BATU), K Troy (UNITE),
B Wall (OPATSI).

Disability Committee (Northern Ireland)

A Smyth (UNITE), B McCrea (UNITE), C Roberts (ATL),
F Warwick (INTO), J Reid (UTU), J Larkin (PCS),
J Coghlan (NUJ), J Dunn (PCS), M Dunningan (NIPSA),
M Trimble (UNISON), M Young (GMB), M Cotton (IBOA),
N Fleming (CWU), N O'Toole (USDAW), P Sullivan (SIPTU),
P McCormick (UNISON), R Fox (INTO), S McKee (UTU), S
Rock (SIPTU), S E Douglas (ATL), S Gribben (CWU),
T Creaney (NIPSA).

Disability Committee (Republic of Ireland)

A Lynch (ESU), B McCrea (UNITE), C Scheffer (CWU),
D O'Connor (INTO), G Monaghan (IMPACT), M Branigan
(UNITE), M Gaynor (Disability Activist), B Hannigan
(PSEU), S O'Murchu (ASTI), I Breen (IBOA), A Brennan
(INMO), A Carroll (ESU), J Coghlan (NUJ), D DePaor
(ASTI), A Dolan (TUI), M Durkin (SIPTU), T Dwyer
(CPSU), P Fanning (IMPACT), U Faulkner (IMPACT),
S Gilmartin (PSEU), P Halligan (IFUT), J Hanna (SIPTU),
P Heverin (SIPTU), M Kane (MANDATE), F Lee (PSEU),
M Madden (CPSU), S Magennis (IFUT), C Mahon (INMO),
M Murphy (INTO), P Power (SIPTU), M Quinn (SIPTU)
and M Sharp (IFUT).

Education Trade Union Group

K McAdam (UNITE), P McMurray (GMB), A Donaghy (ATL),
P Mackel (NIPSA), H McKinstry (NIPSA), A Carr (UCU),
A Speed (UNISON), K Smyth (USDAW), J McKeown (UCU),
A Hall-Callaghan (UTU), D Nugent (UTU), F Turner (NAHT),
G Kelly (UNITE), G Murphy (INTO), J Devlin (NASUWT),
K Simms (NASUWT), S Searson (NASUWT), S Maguire
(ASPECT), J Pollock (ATL).

Equality & Human Rights Committee

J Reid (UTU), A Millar (NIPSA), B McCrea (UNITE),
F Carolan (UNISON), D Toner (BDTC), D Walker (GMB),
G Alexander (NIPSA), L Nelson-Gorman ((SIPTU),
M Graves (UTU), S Kelly (INTO), S Harvey (NIPSA),
M Galloway (PCS), V Holding (CWU UK), W Scott (INTO).

Global Solidarity Committee

L Arias (GSU), M Barry (SIPTU), T Boucher (TEEU),
J Bowen (CTU), R Brady (NUJ), F Brougham (INTO),
S Brown (UTU), J Coghlan (NUJ), M Diskin (BTC),
S Dooley (NUJ), M Dowling (KTU), L Dunne (AHCPs),
A Flynn (IFUT), K Gaughran (CPSU), T Graham (NASUWT),
P Hardiman (GTC), P Hennessy (ESU), V Holding (CWU
UK), L Huston (CWU UK), A Kane (SIPTU), E Kelly
(INMO), J Kelly (UNITE), F Keoghane (TEEU), M LaCombre
(MANDATE), E Lahiff (IFUT), M Leydon (ASTI), S Mackell
(GSU), P Matthews (CWU), P McCrea (PSEU), J McCrohan
(IMPACT), N McGuirk (PSEU), D McKendry (NASUWT),
D Moran (MANDATE), C Muffly (IMO), J O'Brien (INTO),
M O'Brien (SIPTU), D O'Cearuill (INMO), T O'Connor (TUI),
B Ogle (UNITE), F O'Neill (ESU), J Orr (UTU),
A Piggott (ASTI), E Quinn (PSEU), A Seely (SIPTU),
E Soyee (CPSU), D Tobin (BTC), P Torsney (CWU).

Health & Safety Committee (Northern Ireland)

A McDonnell (NIPSA), A McGarrigle (NASUWT), B Brand (UTU), B Matin (UNISON), B Goodfellow (SIPTU), D Blair (USDAW), D Cotter (USDAW), D McPoland (FBU), F Quinn (INTO), G Corry (GMB), G Alexander (NIPSA), H McKinstry (NIPSA), K Sweeny (CWU), L Love (UTU), L Brennan (UNITE), N Leese (SIPTU), P Archer (UCATT), R Rafferty (UNISON), T McLaughlin (NASUWT).

Health & Safety Committee (Republic of Ireland)

B Barrett (IBOA), F Barry (UNITE), E Brady (MANDATE), B Carty (IMPACT), S Cronin (SIPTU College), T Delaney (POA), E Devoy (TEEU), M Dowling (SIPTU), J Geoghegan (INMO), R Jordan (INTO), J Kane (MLSA), P Kenny (CWU), M Malone (BATU), G Maybury (PSEU), C Mullin (INMO), M Murphy (OPATSI), D O'Connor (INTO), D O'Toole (ASTI), A Owens (IMO), M Quinn (SIPTU), D Robinson (IMPACT), C Rowland (SIPTU), G Talty (INMO), A Tully (IFUT), K Varley (IBOA).

Health Services Committee (Northern Ireland)

A McDonnell (NIPSA), A McGarrigle (NASUWT), GB Brand (UTU), B Martin (UNISON), B Goodfellow (SIPTU), D Blair (USDAW), D Cotter (USDAW), D McPoland (FBU), F Quinn (INTO), G Corry (GMB), G Alexander (NIPSA), H McKinstry (NIPSA), K Sweeney (CWU), L Love (UTU), L Brennan (UNITE), N Leese (SIPTU), P Archer (UCATT), R Rafferty (UNISON), T McLaughlin (NASUWT).

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Committee (Northern Ireland)

D Toner (BDTC), D Halliday (PCS), F Carolan (UNISON), G Lee (PCS), G Lavery (USDAW), J Reid (UTU), K McDowdall (FBU), K Bailie (NIPSA), L O'Prey (NASUWT), M McAleer (GMB), M Hamilton (BDTC), N Burrows (USDAW), S Browne (UTU), S Kelly (INTO), S O'Mara (NIPSA).

Northern Ireland Committee

J Barbour (FBU), B Campfield (NIPSA), J Dawson (GMB), L Graham (BFAWU), A Hall-Callaghan (UTU), L Huston (CWU UK), M Lafferty (USDAW), M Langhammer (ATL), B Lawn (PCS), P Mackell (NIPSA), J Mc Camphill (NASUWT), P McKeown (UNISON), M Morgan, (NIPSA), C Murchan (NTC), G Murphy (INTO), M O'Rourke (SIPTU), J Pollock (UNITE), A Speed (UNISON), T Trainor (UNITE).

North South Committee

D Begg (GS Congress), P Bunting (AGS NICTU), E McGlone (UNITE), P Dooley (UNISON), P McKeown (UNISON), Jack O'Connor (SIPTU), J Douglas (MANDATE), A Hall-Callaghan (UTU), S Cody (IMPACT), L Broderick (IBOA), L Huston (CWU), B Campfield (NIPSA), G Murphy (INTO), E Devoy (TEEU), J Kelly (UNITE), J Moore (UCATT).

Private Sector Industrial Committee

L Broderick (IBOA), B Byrne (UNITE), T Delany (CWU), E Devoy (TEEU), S Dooley (NUJ), J Douglas (MANDATE), A Hall (TEEU), J Kelly (UNITE), J King (SIPTU), S Mackell (GSU), G McCormack (SIPTU), O Reidy (SIPTU), C Rowland (SIPTU), M Staunton (IMPACT).

Public Services Committee

R Browne (UNITE), T Casey (MLSA), J Clinton (POA), S Cody (IMPACT), L Doran (INMO), T Geraghty (PSEU), M Jennings (IFUT), P Kavanagh (TEEU), P King (ASTI), D Lynch (VOA), J MacGabhann (TUI), G Mealy (SIPTU), J Moore (UCATT), S Nunan (INTO), C Rohan (AHCPs), E Ronayne (CPSU), S Tweed (IMO), B Wall (OPATSI).

Retired Workers Committee (Northern Ireland)

M Galloway (PCS), R Gray (NASUWT), E Harvey, H Rafferty, G Cassidy and J Matthews (UNITE), J Hanna (GMB), J Hughes (FBU), S Dodds and M McColgan (NIPSA), R Atkinson (UTU), M Holmes (GMB), F Hughes (PCS), J Martin (CWU), J Ley (NUJ), S Caul (CSPA), M Ferris and P Houlahan (UNISON).

Retired Workers Committee (Republic of Ireland)

JJ Higgins (CWU), J McCarthy (TUI), D Sheridan (IBOA), B Keelty (IBOA), D Desmond (INTO), C Percival (NUJ), P Moran (SIPTU), C Kerrigan (UNITE), D Griffin (UNITE), B Burke (IMPACT), B Clarke (IMPACT), M Duffy (IMPACT), J Nealon (IMPACT), G Walsh (IMPACT), C O'Cleirigh (IFUT), B Ó'Coiláin (IFUT), M Doyle (ASTI), T Dowling (TEEU), B Fitzpatrick (AHCPs), C Conville (TUI), R Hutton (TUI), F Farrell (UNITE), J Whelan (UNITE), G McGovern (GSU), A Gilligan (SIPTU), JJ McLoughlin (SIPTU), P Browne (SIPTU), G O'Donoghue (ASTI), S Hall (ASTI), C Kelly (CWU), M Browne (IBOA), D Ronan (INMO), H Collins (ASTI) and M McGuinness (INMO).

Retired from the Committee

E MacCurtain Pearce (NUJ), H Buckley (INMO) and M O'Halloran (SIPTU).

Strategic Implementation Committee

A Dolan (TUI), M Mulcahy (ASTI), C Scheffer (CWU), C Bond (BECTU), C Treacy (INMO), D O'Connor (INTO), E Buckley (SIPTU), G Alexander (NIPSA), J Reid (UTU), J Quinn (FBU), J Boushell (SIPTU), J Caldwell (FDA), L Huston (CWU UK), C Mahon (INMO), M Geoghegan (IBOA), M Malone (BATU), D O'Brien (INMO), P Dooley (UNISON), B Hannigan (PSEU), R Donaghey (SIPTU), R Higgins (SIPTU), S McKee (UTU), S Searson (NASUWT), T Trainor (UNITE), T Dwyer (CPSU), E Ronayne (CPSU).

Standing Orders Committee

J McGinley, Chair (SIPTU), A Donnelly (UNISON), J Gaffney (MANDATE), P Guilfoyle (TEEU), C Martin (UNITE).

Women's Committee (Northern Ireland)

A Speed (UNISON), A Rea (NIPSA), T Graham (NASUWT), B Callaghan (Belfast & District Trades Council), T Devenney (ATL), T Trainor (UNITE), G Partridge (UNITE), M McKee (UNISON), J Reid (UTU), S Browne (UTU), A Conway (INTO), F McCall (NUJ), A Dines (SIPTU), G Keown (GMB), M Gregg (GMB), V Holding (CWU), B Wright (ATL), C McCarthy (INTO), D McCusker (USDAW), D Collins (CWU), E Gorman (IBOA), G Alexander (NIPSA), N Connor (Belfast & District Trades Council), T Muldoon (SIPTU).

Women's Committee (Republic of Ireland)

M Branigan (UNITE), M Brennan (PSEU), M Browne (IBOA), A Carroll (ESU), M Coughlan (IMPACT), A Dolan (TUI), T Dwyer (CPSU), M Geoghegan (IBOA), S Griffin (SIPTU), A Lynch (ESU), C Heneghan (Galway CTU), R McEleney (PSEU), M Ohle (ASTI), C Scheffer (CWU), Aileen Atcheson (Clonmel CTU), C Browne (INTO), H Butler (INMO), T Caherty (NUJ), D Curley (MANDATE), R Donaghey (Bray & District CTU), J Donegan (IFUT), L Dowd (UCATT), J Fanning (VOA), P Fanning (IMPACT), M Frahill (INMO), J Gaffney (MNADATE), M Lally (INTO), M Leydon (ASTI), H Linehan (CPSU), N Lucey (NUJ), M Moody Maguire (UNITE), A Russell (SIPTU) and C Muffly (IMO).

Youth Committee (Northern Ireland)

S Harvey (NIPSA), L Nelson (SIPTU), K Bailie (NIPSA), B O'Reilly (B&DTUC), C Murphy (UCATT), D Liathian (NUJ), R Creaney (Craigavon TC), K McCann (IBOA), P Mackel (CWU), D Nugent (UTU), J Orr (UTU), P Lynn (UNISON), J Fitzgerald (NASUWT), J McAteer (UNITE), N Moore (UNITE), E Cunningham (USDAW), R Hall (NUS-USI).

Youth Committee (Republic of Ireland)

D Keenan (CWU), T Walsh (INTO), D Gibney (MANDATE), R Burtenshaw (NUJ), W Courtney (IMO), G Davidson (UNITE), E Dwyer (TUI), U Faulkner (IMPACT), B Gorman (CWU), T Keane (MANATE), L Kelly (IMPACT), C Kinsella (ASTI), C McDonald (CPSU), a Millar (INMO), L Mulligan (SIPTU), G Murphy (IBOA), M Nolan (TEEU), D O'Neill (SIPTU), D O'Toole (ASTI), S Peters (TUI), C Reid (CPSU).

BODIES ON WHICH CONGRESS IS REPRESENTED

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Industrial Relations

Courts Services Board
Employment Appeals Tribunal
Labour Court
Labour Court Users Council
Labour Relations Commission
Personal Injuries Assessment Board
Private Security Authority
Redundancy Panel

Economic Affairs

County and City Development Boards
Harbour Boards
Local Government Strategic Policy Committees
Monitoring Committees for Community Employment Programme
National Competitiveness Council
National Economic & Social Council
National Statistics Board

Education and Training

Expert Group on Future Skill
Education & Training Boards (some)
Governing Authority of National University of Ireland
Governing Bodies of Institutes of Technology
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCI Human Resources and Industrial Relations Advisory Group
Quality Assurance Group Education Sector
Skillnets
Teaching Council

Safety, Health & Welfare

Health and Safety Authority
 National Irish Safety Organisation
 Railway Safety Advisory Council

Social Affairs

Equality & Rights Alliance
 Global Campaign for Education for All
 National Disability Authority
 National Pensions Board
 Social Welfare Tribunal
 National Women's Strategy Monitoring Group
 Fairtrade Mark Ireland
 Universal Periodic Review Stakeholders Group

Other Bodies

Company Law Review Group
 Construction Workers Benevolent Fund & Construction Workers Health Trust
 CSR Stakeholder Forum (DJEI)
 DFAT – NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights
 Dublin City Council Fire Brigade Development Board
 For Diversity Against Discrimination
 Forest Certification Stakeholder Consultation Group
 Irish Auditing & Accounting Supervisory Authority
 Law Society's Complaints and Client Relations Committee
 National Roads Authority
 Personal Injuries Assessment Board
 Barristers Conduct Tribunal

NORTHERN IRELAND**Industrial Relations**

Fair Employment Tribunals – CHECKING
 Industrial Court
 Industrial Tribunals - CHECKING
 Labour Relations Agency
 LRA Arbitration Panels
 Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards

EU Structural Fund Monitoring Committees

PEACE III Monitoring Committee
 NI Competitiveness and Employment EU Structural Funds Programme

Other Bodies

Trademark
 Intertrade Ireland
 Northern Ireland Local Government Superannuation Committee

International Bodies

Eurofound
 European Centre for Vocational Training
 CEDEFOP
 EU Advisory Committee on Freedom of Workers
 EU Advisory Committee on Health & Safety at Work
 EU Advisory Committee of Social Security Systems
 EU Advisory Committee on Social Security for Migrant Workers
 EU Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene
 EU Economic and Social Committee
 EU Social Fund Advisory Committee
 EU Social Security for Migrant Workers
 EU Standing Committee on Employment
 European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
 European Social Fund Advisory Committee
 European Trade Union Confederation, (ETUC)
 ETUC Various Committees
 European Institute for Gender Equality
 European Trade Union Institute
 International Labour Office
 International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
 Trade Union Advisory Committee, OECD

APPENDIX 6 - ACTION ON MOTIONS TO BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 2013

1. ETUC Unit to Monitor the Fiscal and Labour Market Structural 'Reform' Agenda - SIPTU - Adopted

The General Secretary had discussions with the ETUC General Secretary about this matter. In conjunction with the ITUC and the Trade Union Advisory Committee of OECD a meeting was held with IMF in Washington over two days in June to discuss labour market developments. There was a special focus on damage to collective bargaining systems. The outcome of the IMF meeting was an agreement for regular joint monitoring of labour markets and the consequences of structural 'reform'.

2. Economic Policy Executive Council - Adopted

The research effort and output of NERI in this is organised around the following five major themes:

1. Labour market developments and outlook – wages, jobs and pensions.
2. Investment in key economic and social infrastructure.
3. Enterprise policy.
4. Macro-economic outlook and fiscal options.
5. Options for the reform of banking.

The Institute uses the Quarterly Economic Observer to address each of these areas periodically. In addition, staff have written separate papers on banking, the importance of public capital spending and contributed extensively to ongoing analyses of trends in the labour market covering both Northern Ireland and the Republic. Work on enterprise policy is outlined in the current NERI programme of work. (http://www.nerinstitute.net/research/prog_of_work/).

3. Economic Policy Unite – Amended Motion Adopted Amendment: PCS

The research effort and output of NERI in this is organised around the following five major themes:

1. Labour market developments and outlook – wages, jobs and pensions.
2. Investment in key economic and social infrastructure.
3. Enterprise policy.
4. Macro-economic outlook and fiscal options.
5. Options for the reform of banking.

The Institute uses the Quarterly Economic Observer to address each of these areas periodically. In addition, staff have written on separate papers on banking, the importance of public capital spending and contributed extensively to ongoing analyses of trends in the labour market covering both, in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. Work on enterprise policy is outlined in the current NERI programme of work. (http://www.nerinstitute.net/research/prog_of_work/).

4. Financial Transaction Tax CWU – Adopted

Congress continues to advocate the adoption of the Financial Transaction Tax at every opportunity, urging the Irish government to engage with the initiative to adopt such a tax being taken under enhanced co-operation procedure by a number of countries. The statistical aspect of this motion is being raised with the Central Statistics Office.

Executive Council lent their support to a joint call on the Irish government to join the European Union 'Enhanced Co-operation Procedure' initiative. The European Commission is proposing a tax of 0.1% on trading in bonds and shares and 0.01% on trading in derivatives. Eleven member states are working to implement this tax under the EU 'Enhanced Cooperation Procedure'.

5. European Union Economic Policy NURMT - Adopted

Congress has worked through the ETUC Executive Committee to give effect to the sentiments contained in this motion. For example, the General Secretary was part of an ETUC delegation that met with representatives of the main political families in advance of the European elections. The actions taken in relation to Motion No. 1 are also relevant to this motion.

6. There is a Better, Fairer Way PCS - Adopted

Congress has led, through its 'Better, Fairer Way' campaign, action against austerity measures including cuts to public services and the imposition of so-called welfare reform. In carrying this out, Congress has delivered a co-ordinated response in relation to industrial action including supporting affiliates taking industrial action and initiating public rallies and marches. Other responses have included holding a series of 'town hall' meetings in conjunction with Trades Councils focussing on the impact of cuts and austerity on local communities. Congress continues to vigorously oppose attacks on the welfare system.

7. Economic Crisis DCTU - Adopted

The research effort and output of NERI in this is organised around the following five major themes:

1. Labour market developments and outlook – wages, jobs and pensions.
2. Investment in key economic and social infrastructure.
3. Enterprise policy.
4. Macro-economic outlook and fiscal options.
5. Options for the reform of banking.

The Institute uses the Quarterly Economic Observer to address each of these areas periodically. In addition, staff have written on separate papers on banking, the importance of public capital spending and contributed extensively to ongoing analyses of trends in the labour market covering, both, in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. Work on enterprise policy is outlined in the current NERI programme of work (http://www.neriinstitute.net/research/prog_of_work/).

8. Older People Executive Council – Adopted

In order to fulfil the terms of Motion 8 a sub-committee was established under the chairmanship of Joe O' Flynn, Congress Treasurer and Executive Council member. The members of the sub-committee were Michael O'Halloran, Marie Doyle, Jimmy Whelan, Fergus Farrell, Michael Duffy, Hugh Rafferty, Margaret Galloway and John McFawley

Fergus Whelan and John O'Farrell represented the Congress Secretariat.

The sub-committee surveyed affiliates and produced a number of draft reports which were discussed with North and South Retired Workers Committees which in turn influenced the recommendations of the report which was discussed by the General Purposes Committee at its meeting in February 2015.

9. Trade Union Commission Executive Council – Adopted

The main streams of work associated with the implementation of BDC 2013 decisions are:

- Resources Task Group aimed at optimising use of resources through centralisation.
- Cork Council of Trade Unions Project aimed at designing a prototype model to maximise participation in trade union activity locally.
- Establishment of a Workers' College to equip leaders at all levels to advocate for an alternative to neo-liberalism.

In January 2015 the Executive Council discussed a draft proposal for the establishment of a "trust structure" that would be mandated with taking forward these work streams as well as identifying further initiatives that would benefit the trade union movement. At the time of writing this report consideration of how best matters could be brought forward was progressing.

10. Global Solidarity Prison Officers' Association Kildare Council of Trade Unions Energy Services Union – Adopted

Following discussions with the Global Solidarity committee, new terms of reference were drawn up for Executive Council approval in the Summer of 2014. The TOR mirror those existing for both the Youth Committee and Women's Committee but with the inclusion of specific functions/activities to meet our contractual obligations with Irish Aid and the proposed strategic aims of the development education programme.

The Executive Council approved the new Terms of Reference in July 2014, and the GS Committee was reconstituted in October 2014. This committee is now on the same constitutional footing as other Congress Committees.

**11. Northern Ireland
Executive Council – Adopted**

Congress continues to press for the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, including the promised Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and Charter of Rights for the island. Furthermore, Congress is leading on campaigns against the Austerity policies of the coalition government and mobilising against the implementation of Welfare Reform in Northern Ireland.

**12. Northern Ireland Society
NIPSA – Adopted**

Congress participated in the Panel of Parties talks in Northern Ireland, meeting with the Haass and O’Sullivan team and making a submission to the panel. Congress is participating in an initiative under the auspices of the Labour Relations Agency to reinvigorate the Declaration of Protection which was developed in the 1990s by the trade union movement working in partnership with employers. The redrafted Declaration will reiterate the trade union commitment to workplaces free from all forms of discrimination and intimidation.

**13. Treatment of Older People
Fermanagh Trades Council - Adopted**

The passage of this motion has been welcomed by the National Pensioners’ Convention, and has similarly been adopted by the NIC. Further discussions will take place with the Republic of Ireland Retired Workers Committee to see if the motion can be actioned by affiliates in the Republic who have members in the caring professions.

**14. The 15th Anniversary of the
Good Friday Agreement
UNISON – Adopted**

Congress continues to lead the lobby for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. This has been pursued at the highest levels of the NI Executive; a Congress delegation has also given evidence to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Congress continues to work in partnership with allies such as the Human Rights Consortium in the pursuit of a Bill of Rights.

**15. Community Relations
Belfast & District Trades Council -
Adopted
Amendment Unite - Withdrawn**

Congress continues to lead the lobby for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. This has been pursued at the highest levels of the NI Executive; a Congress delegation has also given evidence to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Congress continues to work in partnership with allies such as the Human Rights Consortium in the pursuit of a Bill of Rights.

**16. Equality
Executive Council – Adopted**

Congress continues to prioritise the promotion of equality and the combatting of discrimination North and South through the work of the Equality Officers and Equality and Human Rights related Committees. A detailed report of that work is contained in this report to the BDC 2015. The following specifically applies to the action on Motion 16 to the 2013 BDC:

Bullet point a) Draft equality proofing tool was sent to the Equality Committees for comment and suggestions. Once agreed training and capacity building will be put in place to assist us in assessing the impact of all our actions.

Bullet point b) - Part of pre-budget submissions.

Bullet point c) - Merger of Equality Authority and Human Rights Commission going ahead. Congress has met with the Commission to explore how we might work together on areas of mutual interest.

Bullet point d) - Statutory duty on public sector to promote equality of opportunity is contained in the merger Bill. Congress has facilitated a joint project proposal from PSEU and ICCL to work together on raising awareness and capacity building in preparation for the new duty.

**17. International Violence Against Women
CSP – Adopted**

1. Congress has sought direction through the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy as to how practically we can support the Indian Association.
2. Congress actively participated in a 16 day campaign in November 2013 - <http://www.ictu.ie/equality/2013/11/25/congress-supports-the-16-days-of-action-campaign-t/>.

18. Collective Bargaining Executive Council – Adopted

Congress has been involved in intensive discussions on amending the 2001 and 2004 Industrial Relations Acts to bring Ireland in line with international (ILO) and European Convention on Human Rights obligations to respect the right to collective bargaining. This is a commitment in the Programme for Government. The Cabinet agreed a schedule of legislative provisions in May 2014 and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation published these. The Executive Council was briefed on the proposals and in addition briefings were also provided for a number of affiliates.

At the time of writing, Congress is awaiting the enactment of the legislation.

19. Anti-Victimisation Legislation For Union Activists, Including Protection of Whistle-Blowers IMPACT – Adopted

Securing improved protection for workers from all forms of reprisals when they come forward and blow the whistle on wrongdoing was a priority activity for the Congress legal Strategy Group.

The Group intensively lobbied the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to highlight the importance of providing adequate protection to prevent the penalisation from occurring. The group undertook the complex task of drafting a new section for the Protected Disclosures Bill setting out a system of ‘interim relief’, whereby an employee who presents a complaint that they have been, or are about to be, unfairly dismissed, arising from their making a protected disclosure in accordance with the legislation may apply to the Circuit Court to prevent that dismissal from going ahead pending their case being finally determined.

Although the amendment ran into significant resistance, Congress is happy to report that it was essentially successful and is included in the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

In addition, Congress has been involved in negotiations on an LRC Code of Practice to support the process of making a protected disclosure at the level of the enterprise. The negotiation team is Seamus Dooley, Regional Secretary NUJ and Matt Staunton, Assistant General Secretary IMPACT and Esther Lynch, Congress.

Congress arranged briefings for affiliates to explain in plain English the provisions of the legislation. In addition, to assist unions, Congress provided a guide from the trade union perspective, to negotiating Whistle-Blowing Policies at the level of the enterprise.

20. Freelance Workers NUJ – Adopted

This is a long standing problem, whereby the Competition Authority of Ireland have determined that self-employed workers cannot exercise their right to collectively bargain. Congress has tried a number of ways to address this ban. However, despite successive governments agreeing that it is in fact a problem no solution makes it to completion.

Specific action taken during the period under review included arranging for John Hendy QC to meet with the trade unions affected in Dublin during January 2014. Drafting amendments to the Competition and Consumer Protection Bill to allow for an exemption for ‘workers’ as defined under the 1990 Industrial Relations Act i.e. in circumstances where the self-employed worker personally provides the service.

In addition on foot of the ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in December 2014 in the case of FNV Kunsten Informatie en Media v Staat der Nederlanden (Case C-413/13), Congress wrote to the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission requesting them to revise their earlier Decision (No.E/04/002 of 2004). The facts in the CJEU case taken by FNV in the Netherlands are very similar, dealing with a collective agreement concluded by FNV Kunsten Informatie en Media on behalf of self-employed musicians in an orchestra whereas the collective agreement determined to be unlawful in Ireland was concluded by SIPTU/EQUITY on behalf of voice over actors.

Referring to false self-employment in the context of competition law the CJEU recalled that it is settled case-law that the ‘the classification of a ‘self-employed person’ under national law does not prevent that person being classified as an employee within the meaning of EU law if his independence is merely notional, thereby disguising an employment relationship’ (para 35). The CJEU determined that self-employed persons have a right to collective bargaining that should not be destroyed by Competition Law. At the time of writing Congress has sought Senior Counsel Opinion on the possible avenues that can be advanced.

21. Employment and Social Cohesion Executive Council – Adopted

Congress continues to press for a more proactive employment policy. This is done through advocacy of increased investment and specifically of social clauses. Congress addressed the Oireachtas Committee on Employment on this issue. Congress continues to monitor developments in the social welfare sector, conscious of the commitment to maintain social welfare payments at their current levels. We closely monitor developments in the European Semester as any threat to social welfare levels are likely to emanate from this quarter.

22. Decent Work, Decent Contracts and a Living Wage MANDATE – Adopted

Congress has recently initiated a campaign that will seek to build a consensus across society that every worker is entitled to fair conditions at work and has developed a 'Charter of Fair Conditions at Work' which sets out five basic employment rights. The campaign intends to seek the support of politicians, civil society organisations and employers for the charter. Congress also made a submission to the Low Pay Commission calling for a substantial increase in the hourly rate of the minimum wage.

In parallel the NERI was heavily involved in the research project that led to the establishment of a Living Wage figure, €11.45, for a single worker based in the Republic of Ireland. The Institute produced two working papers on the issue 'A Living Wage for Ireland: Some Considerations and Initial Estimates' and 'The Impacts and Challenges of a Living Wage for Ireland' and has contributed regularly to the public debate on this issue.

In the first quarter of 2014, the Institute produced a number of internal briefing documents that described and analysed pay rates across the labour market—with particular focus on sectors of the employment associated with the JLC regime. This work led to a working paper "An Overview of the Irish Labour Market" that characterised the Irish labour market as polarised, with an unusually small public sector and comparatively low female participation rate. The paper established a link between low rates of pay and low hours of employment, also.

More recently the Institute used the Quarterly Economic Observer, spring 2015 to examine the issue of low pay in Ireland and established that 25% of employees (approximately 345,000 people) earn an hourly wage of less than the Living Wage threshold. In addition, the NERI recently made a submission to the Low Pay Commission on the economic impact of raising the national minimum wage in April of this year.

23. JobBridge CWU – Adopted

The oversight of the JobBridge programme is a responsibility of the Labour Market Council established in September 2013. Maria Sherlock of SIPTU is a member of this Council. Congress continues to monitor the operation of JobBridge and to draw to the attention of Department of Social Protection any instances of bad practice brought to its attention.

24. Youth Unemployment GSU – Adopted

Youth unemployment, its effects and consequences, has been the significant policy priority of the Congress Youth Committee and staff involved in the youth programme. A major initiative was undertaken in collaboration with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the Irish Second Level Students' Union (ISSU) to develop a policy paper and advocacy campaign in the issues of youth unemployment.

The aim of the paper was to help shape a more coherent policy response to the youth jobs' crisis. It presented a set of coherent, deliverable policy proposals to help ensure that young people make a smoother transition from education to employment, gain real and worthwhile learning opportunities through work placements and, on entering the labour market, enjoy conditions that will provide them with a decent standard of living and enable them to reach their potential as fully participative citizens. The policy demands included the call for the adoption of a rights-based approach to youth policy, the promotion of secure access to decent work for young people and a demand that all work-related initiatives entail real learning opportunities in the workplace and do not undermine current working conditions and protections. The joint organisation document also called for effective collective bargaining legislation.

The document received widespread media coverage which was followed up with meetings with the Oireachtas Committee, the Department of Social Protection and various politicians.

The Congress Youth Committee developed a campaign plan which was approved by the Executive Council. The Youth Committee continue to work on the Rights Campaign which plans for a number of public awareness seminars to raise the issues of concern among the 18-25 year olds. Their first public awareness seminar was held in October 2014 with a second seminar planned for early 2015.

25. Organising & Recruitment CWU UK – Adopted

Following on from BDC 2013, a major conference was held in Dublin in November, which brought together organisers from unions across the island. An extensive report was compiled from the conference with a set of recommendations that were considered and agreed by the Executive Council at its meeting in December 2013.

The key objective approved by the Executive was ‘to develop a collaborative organising approach to unionise a strategic but winnable target that would have the effect of galvanising the engagement and involvement of unions in coordinated activity.’ It was further agreed that we would:

- Develop a pilot project, undertaking research to identify the target sector, enterprise or organisation and ensuring that the agreed pilot is a project that unions want to engage with and has a real chance of success.
- Explore sectors/enterprises that are well unionised in other jurisdictions, where advances have been made through the achievement of a global agreement or where strong Works Councils already exist.
- Develop a strategy and plan for the pilot project; agreeing a budget and establishing a central fund supported by affiliated unions; agreeing and setting criteria to measure and evaluate achievement.
- Seek a coordinated response from unions – all unions with organising capacity and resources would be asked to engage in the pilot.
- Identify and implement a training programme to build the capacity of officials, workplace representatives and activists to better equip them to achieve the objectives of the programme.
- Capture and define learning from the pilot to ensure adoption into union practice; establishing this work as part of the Commission on Union Organising under the auspices of the General Purposes Committee Resources Group.

This project is being coordinated by Heads of Organising from collaborating unions. It was agreed with the Resources Group that the pilot project would be integrated with both the Trade Union Centre and the Decent Work Campaign and undertaken in Cork. Several meetings have taken place with the Cork Council of Trade Unions and with officials covering Cork.

26. Pensions Executive Council – Adopted

The Social Welfare Act 2013 altered the priority order on the wind-up of Defined Benefit Pension Schemes. The changes came about as a result of a significant lobbying effort led by Congress and supported by IBEC, Irish Association of Pension Funds and the Society of Actuaries. The stakeholders made a joint submission to the Minister who received it very positively but clearly had to fight a major internal battle to get it past her officials and her cabinet colleagues. However the Minister chose not to adopt our suggestion that the new arrangements could be used to adjust the funding standard for schemes continuing in existence. Moreover, in the time lapse between her positive acceptance of our submission and her finally getting it past the post, many trustees and sponsoring employers gave up in despair and wound up their schemes on very inequitable terms. Nonetheless, given the barriers placed in the way of the Minister it would be churlish to describe what she has done as too little too late. In fact the new law, however limited in scope, is the only success Congress has had with its lobbying on pension matters since 2008.

Congress lobbied strongly against the approach of government to the raising of the pension age and the changes to the PRSI bands that adversely affect female workers. Our efforts were ignored by government. Congress made a submission to the OECD Review of Pensions in Ireland, The Pension Board Review of Defined Benefit Provision, and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection on the same matters.

27. European Globalisation Fund TEEU – Adopted

Congress attended a workshop in Brussels regarding the format of the European Globalisation Fund post-2014. Congress maintains contact with the Department of Education and Skills with the relevant unions, the Commission and MEPs regarding the possibilities of EGF funding as and when plant closures arise.

28. Casualisation TUI – Adopted

This motion called on Congress to take a number of actions in order to curtail the drift towards casualisation in the education sector. As part of the Haddington Road agreement a number of initiatives were identified to examine the appropriateness of the use of fixed-term and part time employment contracts in teaching. Agreement was also reached on measures to ensure that contracts of indefinite duration would be awarded after particular criteria had been satisfied. In light of these developments Congress, will in consultation with the unions in education look again at the necessity of establishing a high level group to deal with this issue. More generally Congress recently commenced a campaign to highlight the issue of casualisation across all sectors of the economy.

29. Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act IFUT – Adopted

The threat of increasing casualisation and the problems faced by teachers and lecturers who are employed on fixed-term contracts was pursued by the Congress Public Sector Committee through Haddington Road agreement on public sector pay and productivity. This saw the establishment of an expert group chaired by senior counsel Peter Ward. The expert group reported in late 2014. The Minister for Education Ms Jan Sullivan accepted the expert groups report and stated her intention to implement the recommendations from the beginning of the 2015 school year. Congress will continue to press for improvements to job security.

30. Bullying UTU

The Health & Safety Committee in the Republic of Ireland has committed to developing actions to manage stress and psychosocial risks in the workplace as part of a contribution to the campaign on this topic being promoted by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. The Committee liaised with representatives from education unions to specifically address this issue in that context, and incorporated their recommendations into activities to mark European Week for Safety and Health at Work in October 2014.

31. Banking Sector IBOA – Adopted

The actions sought in this motion are being actively pursued by the General Secretary and discussions have been held with the Minister for Finance concerning these.

32. The Retail Sector USDAW – Adopted

Congress continues to highlight the devastation that the austerity agenda has wrought on workers in the public and private sectors.

33. Impact of Government Economic Policies on Low and Middle Income Earners CPSU – Adopted

NERI is currently developing a model that will allow the NERI to study income distribution in the Republic of Ireland. This work will ensure that the impact of economic policy decisions (for example, changes to taxes, wages and social welfare before and after a budget) can be analysed in a clear and robust manner. To date, a number of working papers, seminars and presentations have been held on the topic. Detail on this work is available in the NERI annual report 2014. (<http://www.neriinstitute.net/research/neri-annual-report-2014/>).

34. Working a 'Laying' Week CWU UK - Withdrawn

35. Public Wealth NIPSA – Adopted

NERI completed a detailed working paper on options for a wealth tax in the Republic of Ireland. This paper provided an overview of the available data on public wealth in the country and discussed the impact a wealth tax could have on economic growth, savings and capital flight. The NERI plans to replicate aspects of this work in Northern Ireland. The Institute is in discussion with the Office of National Statistics regarding access to data that would make this work possible.

36. Unite the Generations in a Campaign to Defend Public Services in Both Jurisdictions on the Island of Ireland Fermanagh Trades Council – Adopted

The report issued from the adoption of Motion 8, encourages all unions to utilise the skills and experience of all of their members especially those who are no longer wage earners but whose commitment and contribution to this movement should be recognised as both an asset and an example.

The report calls on the Northern Ireland Committee to take steps to ensure that all unions provide proper structures with adequate funding to enable retired members to continue to participate fully in their union's activities.

37. Public Health Services INMO – Adopted

The NERI produced a research inBrief that provides an overview of spending on healthcare in Ireland, gives a breakdown of the sources of funding in the sector and examines recent developments in staffing in the healthcare area. In February 2015, Professor Charles Normand presented a research paper written for the NERI seminar series. The paper entitled “Funding Universal Health and Social Care in Ireland: Ageing, dying, and affordability” can be found on the NERI website.

38. Austerity, Privatisation and Health Inequality UNISON – Adopted

Congress is actively highlighting the attacks on the National Health System including the move towards privatisation and outsourcing. Through the Health Services Committee, Congress is engaging in a programme of work including the organising of a high level conference on public health which will highlight health inequalities as well as calling for the protection of the NHS.

39. Funding for Health & Primary Care IMO – Adopted

Congress continues to advocate increased resources for the health sector in our advocacy work, and to point out the damage done by continued cutbacks. We continue to monitor the proposed implementation of Universal Health Insurance which carries certain dangers both for the funding of services and for the level of cover to be offered. A proposal for a campaign on this issue has been submitted to the Executive. We note with grave concern the country specific recommendation regarding health spending issued by the EU as part of our first experience of the European Semester.

40. Congress Nominees to State Boards CCTU – Adopted as Amended Amendment- Unite

Congress has sought the restoration of worker nominees to the Boards of the Port Companies. In a submission to the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport on the implementation of the government's Ports Strategy we have sought a specific provision in legislation to be enacted to provide for a Worker Director on the Board of ports of regional significance.

41. Worker Director on Boards PSEU – Adopted

Congress continues to seek agreement to provide for Worker Directors on the Boards of state owned companies. Most recently we have sought agreement to have a worker director on the new agency to be created as result of the merger of the Railway Procurement Agency and the National Roads Authority.

42. Investment in Education INTO – Adopted

The development of our education system continues to be part of our advocacy work. The matters raised in the motion have been raised with the relevant Ministers.

Emergency Motion No. 1: Community Cuts IMPACT/SIPTU – Adopted

This motion was moved as part of an ongoing campaign co-ordination by Congress and involving UNITE, IMPACT and SIPTU. The campaign has continued, targeting improved union organisation in the sector the canvassing of local CEO's for support and lobbying of politicians.

Emergency Motion No. 2: Fiscal Emergency Measures in the Public Interest UNITE/CPSU/INMO/IBOA

The Public Services Committee of Congress has lobbied the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to repeal the sections of the FEMPE legislation that give unilateral powers to Government to alter the terms and conditions of service of public servants. Some progress has been made in discussions to date and it is anticipated that an appropriate amendment to the legislation will be proposed by government in due course.

APPENDIX 7 – CONGRESS DISPUTES COMMITTEE REPORTS

TEEU V UNITE and UNITE V TEEU Disputes Committee Report July 2012

In July 2012, the Executive Council approved a report from a Disputes Committee established to hear complaints, by TEEU against UNITE and by UNITE against the TEEU. The report is contained here. One of the recommendations in the report was that further dialogue be encouraged between the unions in order to normalise arrangements between them. In that regard two agreements were reached the two unions in December 2013 and these agreements are also contained here.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Report to the Executive Council on the Investigation under Paragraph 41 of the Constitution of the Congress Constitution.

Complaint by TEEU against Unite Complaint by Unite against TEEU

July 2012.

1. Introduction.

1.1 In April 2012 the TEEU wrote to the General Secretary of Congress requesting an investigation by the Congress Executive Council under paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution. The TEEU alleged that Unite were poaching their members contrary to long established spheres of influence, ignoring the provisions of the Congress Constitution and guidelines as they relate to the transfer of members between unions and seeking by their actions to damage the reputation of the TEEU.

1.2 In May 2012 Unite wrote to the General Secretary of Congress requesting an investigation take place by the Congress Executive Council under paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution. Unite alleged that the TEEU was poaching members of Unite and that TEEU personnel had refused Unite members access to sites/ workplaces because of their membership of Unite and insisting that they must become members of TEEU before they could commence employment.

1.3 The requests of both Unions were considered by the Congress Executive Council at its meeting on the 16th May 2012. The Executive Council agreed to establish a formal investigation under Paragraph 41 as requested by both Unions and established a panel to investigate both complaints. The panel was John Douglas (Chair), Shelia Nunan, Tom Geraghty and Seamus Dooley. Liam Berney from the Congress secretariat assisted the panel in its investigation.

2. Paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution.

2.1 Paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution gives extensive powers to the Executive Council. If a complaint or charge against an affiliate is upheld and its conduct or actions are considered to be detrimental to the interests of Congress or other affiliated organisations, the Executive Council can call upon the organisation to desist from such conduct or action, require the organisation to take such steps as may be required to correct or alter the matter complained off and require the organisation to comply with such conditions that may be required by the Executive Council. If any affiliated organisation against whom a claim is upheld fails to act as directed by the Executive Council, it can result in them being suspended or expelled from Congress.

2.2 The Congress Constitution does not prescribe how an investigation under Paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution is to be conducted other than it requires that an organisation against whom a complaint is made, is made aware of the complaint and is given full and ample opportunity to respond to the complaint or charge.

3. Procedure Adopted by the Investigating Panel.

3.1 On the 17th May 2012 the Panel wrote to both Unions. This letter sought a written submission from each union setting out the detail of their complaint and documentation supporting their complaint. Each Union was advised that their submission would be copied to the union against whom the complaint was made. The Unions were also advised that it was the intention of the Investigating Panel to meet with the Unions at some stage during its investigation and the panel reserved the right to meet with the Unions separately if it deemed it appropriate.

3.2 In correspondence with the panel, Unite insisted that some of the documents appended to their submission should not be shown to the TEEU. Unite argued that that they were required to protect the confidentiality of the members referred to in the documents. The Committee would like to record that this caused them

some difficulty in conducting their investigation. However, they did agree that some documents in the Unite submission would not be shared with the TEEU and likewise the documents appended to the TEEU submission would not be shared with Unite.

- 3.3 On the 28th June 2012 the Panel met with both Unions separately in the first instance and a plenary meeting was held on the same day.
- 3.4 In the course of the meetings the Panel asked both unions to outline the complaint against the other union and to respond to the complaint made against them.

4. TEEU Complaint against Unite.

- 4.1 The TEEU allege that Unite have taken into membership members of the TEEU contrary to Paragraph 46 (d) as follows, fitters and electricians at Schering Plough in Swords and Mechanics at Bus Eireann in Limerick.
- 4.2 The TEEU further allege Unite have taken into membership a number of mechanical craft workers at Kennedy Mechanical and Electrical Limited while alleging that they entered into a single union agreement with this company in circumstances where Unite is a joint signatory to an industrial collective agreement with the TEEU.
- 4.3 The TEEU further allege that Unite has taken into membership electricians and electrical apprentices at Kennedy Mechanical and Electrical Limited where the TEEU has sole negotiating rights for electricians in the electrical contracting industry.
- 4.4 The TEEU further allege that Unite has acted contrary to paragraph 46(a), 46(b), 46(c) of the Congress Constitution. The TEEU also allege that Unite has acted contrary to the provisions of the Guidelines on paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution, in particular paragraph 1.3 because they have failed to provide in their rules for the return of members to their original union to comply with a Disputes Committee Decision and paragraph 2.2.5 encouraging TEEU members to join Unite because of the lower membership contribution.
- 4.5 Finally, the TEEU allege that Unite is waging a campaign against the TEEU and is targeting their membership.

5. Unite Complaint against the TEEU.

- 5.1 Unite allege that the TEEU took into membership a number of members of Unite without their knowledge or consent at HA O'Neill Limited.
- 5.2 Unite allege that an official of the TEEU encouraged Unite members on the Guinness/Diageo site on James Street, Dublin to leave Unite. Unite allege that a number of members left Unite and were taken into membership of the TEEU however Unite was not consulted.
- 5.3 Unite allege that the TEEU took into membership mechanical workers who were members of Unite at Mercury Engineering Limited and that Unite members were encouraged to join the TEEU if they wished to be employed on the Intel site. It is further alleged that Unite members at Leo Lynch and Company Limited were given similar encouragement.
- 5.4 Unite further allege that comments made about the future status of British based Unions in Ireland by the General Secretary of the TEEU amounted to an attack on Unite.
- 5.5 In making their complaint Unite did encourage the Panel to adopt an approach to its investigation that would see it recommending to the parties that they resolve their differences through a structured and supervised dialogue.

6. TEEU Response to Unite Complaint.

- 6.1 At the hearing held on the 28th June 2012, the TEEU advised the Panel that it could not respond to the allegations made in the Unite submission as it was not provided with the evidence that Unite was using to support its allegations.
- 6.2 The General Secretary of the TEEU did remark that comments he made about the status of British based Unions was not an attack on Unite but rather a comment made at a seminar in the context of the work that was been undertaken by the Commission on the Irish Trade Union Movement.

7. Unite Response to the TEEU Complaint.

- 7.1 Unite stated that they regarded the TEEU submission to the Panel as an unjustified attack on Unite and in particular on one of its organisers operating in the Construction Industry.
- 7.2 They denied that they were engaged in campaign against the TEEU and cited the fact that Unite have funded and were continuing to fund legal cases from which TEEU members benefitted.

- 7.3 As part of their response Unite did offer to meet with the TEEU to explore the issues raised by both unions with regard to membership transfers in the employments cited.

8. Panels Considerations

- 8.1 Having considered the submissions of the parties the Panel considered that one of the matters that would assist them in coming to conclusions and findings was an agreed position between the TEEU and Unite as to their respective spheres of influence in the sectors of the economy and amongst the categories of workers that were referred to in their submissions to the Panel and in the context of the dispute between them.

- 8.2 On the 2nd July 2012 the Panel wrote to Unite and the TEEU as follows,

"The Panel investigating the complaint by your Union under paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution have asked me to write to you to record their understanding of the spheres of influence held by Unite and the TEEU.

In the Construction Industry - Unite have the right to represent plumbers and glaziers. The TEEU have the right to represent electricians and plumbers.

Mechanical Trades - Unite and the TEEU have a shared sphere of influence for the mechanical trades.

Electricians - The TEEU have exclusive rights to represent electricians.

In recognising these spheres of influence the Investigating Panel point out that it does not prejudice the right of other unions who have closed shop arrangements covering the totality of the workforce. I would be obliged if you could confirm if you are in agreement with the above."

- 8.3 The TEEU responded by stating that they were in agreement with the view of the panel. However they did point out that they also had the right to establish closed shop arrangements referred to in the last paragraph of the Panel's letter.
- 8.4 Unite responded by stating that they were in agreement with the view of the panel. However they claim that they also represent general operative grades in the construction industry.

9. Panel's Findings

- 9.1 The Panel is strongly of the view that the difficulties that exist between the Unions will not be resolved by a finding that one or both of the Unions involved are in breach of the rules of Congress. It is a matter of fact that both unions have denied the allegations made against them both in writing and verbally to the Panel. It would of course be possible for the Panel to seek additional information, look for witness statements and further probe the unions in relation to any additional information obtained. Apart from the time involved, the Panel are not convinced that it would throw any further light on matters and in reality would probably only make things worse.

- 9.2 The Panel is therefore recommending the following course of action,

- That the Executive Council would write to Unite and the TEEU confirming the established spheres of influence agreed between the unions concerned as set out in paragraph's 8.2 of this report. The panel wish to clarify that the matter of the organisation and recruitment of general operatives in the construction industry was not disputed between the parties and the panel have made no finding in respect of this category of worker.
- That the Executive Council would seek in writing from both Unions confirmation that they will continue to abide by the rules of Congress relating to the transfer of members as set out in the various paragraphs of the Congress Constitution and the Guidelines on Paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution.
- Both Unite and the TEEU would be requested to examine if they have taken into membership any members of the other union contrary to the spheres of Influence established between the Unions as part of this process or contrary to the rules of Congress and if they have done so they should cancel their membership and encourage them to join their former Union.

- 9.3 The Panel is convinced that for whatever reason there has developed a very considerable level of distrust between the TEEU and Unite. The Panel is not convinced that the suggestions in the three bullet points above will be enough to settle matters between them. It is for that reason that Panel recommends to the Executive Council that as a matter of urgency, that it seeks the agreement of the Unions to a process to examine how relations between the unions can be normalised.

Agreement between Unite and the TEEU

- 1) This agreement arises on foot of the ICTW decision on a complaint by the TFFC against Unite and a complaint by Unite against the TEEU under Paragraph 41 of the Congress Constitution.
- 2) Both Unions accept the findings as set out in Clause 9.2 of the Dispute Committee Panel's Report.
- 3) Both Unions accept that the agreed Spheres of Influence are as set out in Clause 8.1, as referred to in Clause 9.2 of the Dispute Committee Panel's Findings.
- 4) Both Unions agree that transfers of members between them will henceforth be conducted through the offices of the Irish Regional Secretary of Unite and the General Secretary of the TEEU in accordance with the Rules of Congress and the Spheres of Influence Agreement.
- 5) In accordance with the third bullet point of Clause 9.2 of the Dispute Committee Panel's findings, both Unite and the TFFC will examine if they have taken into membership any members of the other Union contrary to the Spheres of Influence established between them or contrary to the Rules of Congress and if they have done so, they will cancel their membership and encourage them to join the former Union. In this context, the undersigned Irish Regional Secretary of Unite will examine the position in relation to Sehering Plough (now MSD) in Swords, Co. Dublin and el Bus Firearm in Limerick and Kennedy Mechanical & Electrical Contractors Ltd and address the matter in accordance with that third bullet point of the Dispute Committee Panel's decision. Simultaneously the undersigned General Secretary of the TEEU will examine the matters raised by Unite which are referred to in Clause 1.2 and Clause 3.2 of the Dispute Committee Panel's Report. (Unite will authorise the Secretary of the Dispute Committee to release the details, which were submitted confidentially, to the General Secretary of the TEEU).
- 6) Both Unions are committed to improving relations between them in the interests of their respective memberships, the wider Movement and working people generally and this Agreement is being entered into to further this end.

Signed:


Jimmy Kelly
Regional Secretary, Unite

Date:

4/12/2013


Eamon Dwyer
General Secretary, TEEU

Date:

4th December 2013.

GMB and UNITE BE Aerospace Disputes Committee Reports 01/13 and 02/13

In June 2013 the Executive Council approved a Disputes Committee Report 01/13 in respect of a representational dispute between GMB and UNITE at BE Aerospace. The Disputes Committee Report 01/13 is contained here. In July 2013 GMB requested the Executive Council to allow an appeal of Disputes Committee Report 01/13. The Executive Council agreed to the GMB request and a further Disputes Committee was established to hear the appeal. In December 2013 the Executive Council approved Disputes Committee Report 02/13 which is contained here.

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS DISPUTES COMMITTEE REPORT 1 /13

Parties in Dispute: GMB v UNITE

Dispute: Organisation of workers in B/E Aerospace Kilkeel

Date of Hearing: 13th May 2013

Disputes Committee: Brian Campfield (Executive Council); Brian Forbes (Mandate) Owen Reidy (SIPTU).

Attendance Eugene McGlone, Jackie Pollock UNITE, John Dawson GMB.

BACKGROUND

B/E Aerospace employs approximately 750 people at their plant in Kilkeel GMB had recognition for over 25 years for all grades up to the director. In March 2013 GMB made a formal complaint to Congress that UNITE was seeking to organise and represent workers in the company in clear breach of the Constitution of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. A conciliation conference held on 11th April 2013 failed to resolve the matter

GMB CASE

GMB stated that UNITE had taken advantage of organisational difficulties at GMB. UNITE had been actively recruiting GMB members in B/E Aerospace for a number of months. When UNITE first got applications for membership from workers at B/E Aerospace they should have advised the applicants to resolve their differences with GMB. Instead they embarked on a recruitment campaign contrary to the constitution of Congress The inducements offered was that UNITE would re- open a gain sharing deal which had been signed off on previously and would secure permanent posts for agency staff.

There was no attempt to advise GMB as is required by the Constitution of Congress. Following the first contact between the unions on this matter which was initiated by GMB on 15th March 2013 a meeting between the unions concerned was proposed for 29 2013 March but by that stage resignations had commenced and no purpose would have been served by a meeting. In spite of the unconstitutional actions of UNITE, that union had failed to get applications from 80% of the workers in the negotiating unit which GMB claims is the entire workforce.

GMB asked that the Dispute Committee find that UNITE's actions in interfering in B/E Aerospace be deemed a breach of the constitution and that UNITE withdraw and advise those who have applied for membership of UNITE to return to GMB.

UNITE CASE.

UNITE claims that it started to get applications from workers in B/E Aerospace prior to Christmas 2012 and had advised those people to sort out their difficulties with GMB.

In early January UNITE were inundated with calls seeking to join UNITE; they were informed that people were resigning from GMB in massive numbers. The workers concerned stated that relationship with GMB had irrevocably broken down and that they would not rejoin. There were further requests from the workers for meetings right through February. Eventually more than 400 of the workers concerned signed a petition expressing no confidence in GMB and wishing to be represented by UNITE.

UNITE stated that they had applications from more than 82% of shop floor workforce which they regard as the negotiating unit. They had taken no action until early March 2013 when they got the petitions from a general meeting attended by 150 ex- members of GMB. They claim that the gain- sharing issue was not discussed and promises were not made about sub-contractors. UNITE said it was willing to see a ballot of the workforce decide on the matter if necessary.

DISPUTES COMMITTEE FINDING

The Disputes Committee finds that UNITE are in breach of the Constitution of Congress on the following grounds:

- UNITE did not advise all members and ex-members of GMB to resolve their differences with GMB.
- UNITE held a general meeting with members and or ex-members of GMB contrary to the constitution of Congress.
- UNITE wrote to the company seeking recognition contrary to the constitution of Congress.

The Disputes Committee has evidence of an orchestrated campaign on behalf of UNITE by elements both outside and inside the plant which falls very far short of good Trade Union practice. Not least of this was the unprecedented harassment of this Disputes Committee which was clearly led and directed by a UNITE Organiser. Disputes Committees volunteer their services in order to see that our movement adheres to the highest standards. There can be no justification for union officials identifying Disputes Committee members as targets so that they can be subject to at best lobbying and at worst threats and harassment.

The Disputes Committee finds that GMB is correct in its assertion that the negotiating unit is the entire plant of some 750 workers. This would normally give protection to that union unless another union could show that it had applications from 80% of the negotiating unit which is not the position in this case. However for whatever reason GMB membership has almost collapsed and there seem little prospect now of them organising any significant section of the workforce.

Nor does the Disputes Committee believe that the melt down in GMB membership was a result of the actions of UNITE. GMB by its own admission never organised more than 50% of the workforce and over the last few years failed in its duty to properly represent the workforce.

The Disputes Committee nonetheless cannot disregard the potential consequences for trade union organization and membership within the plant. By its own admission GMB did accept that there were problems with their engagement with its members which led to the dissatisfaction and dissension and ultimately significant resignations from the union. In arriving at its findings the Disputes Committee has had to take this into account and the unlikelihood of the disaffected GMB members ever returning to GMB membership.

Therefore this Disputes Committee finds that UNITE should be permitted to take into membership those who have applied into membership before 13th May. Both unions will register the membership and applications for membership from that date with Congress. Neither union will accept any transfer of membership after that date for a period of four years. The two unions are free to recruit non-union workers and new employees.

This finding is designed to ensure that the workforce remains unionized and that GMB is provided with sufficient protection in respect of the remainder of its membership at the Plant.

UNITE can continue to seek recognition from the company in a way which will permit GMB to properly represent its residual membership in the company. If the company agrees to recognise UNITE all bargaining within the negotiating unit will involve the two unions.

Finally the Disputes Committee recommends that UNITE be required to formally accept that their Organisers will never again interfere in a workplace where another union has prior recognition without the strictest observance of the constitution and rules of Congress. UNITE should be required to explain the rules and constitution of Congress to its staff and issue instructions that these rules and the constitution be obeyed.

IRISH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS DISPUTES COMMITTEE REPORT 2 /13

Appeal by GMB of Disputes Committee Report 01/13.

Organisation of Workers in BE Aerospace, Kilkeel.

Disputes Committee: Louise O'Donnell (Executive Council and Chairperson), Billy Hannigan (PSEU) and Jim Mitchell (POA).

Date of Hearing (s): 25th October 2013 and
14th November 2013.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In early 2013 GMB complained to Congress that UNITE had been engaged in a campaign to recruit members of that Union in BE Aerospace. Congress, as per the provisions of the Congress Constitution, organised a conciliation meeting which took place on the 11th April 2013. The parties could not reach an agreement at the meeting and the matter was referred to a Disputes Committee.
- 1.2 A Disputes Committee hearing was held on the 13th May 2013. The Disputes Committee presented its report (01/13) to the Congress Executive Council on the 19th June 2013 and the Executive Council adopted their report. We will summarise the main findings of Disputes Committee Report 01/13 in a later section of this report.

1.3 On the 25th June 2013 the GMB notified Congress by email that it wished to appeal the findings in Disputes Committee Report 01/13. They cited a number of grounds for their appeal. The GMB were advised by letter dated 26th June 2013 that its request would be considered by the Executive Council at its next meeting. The Congress Executive Council considered the request for an appeal at its meeting on the 17th July 2013. It was agreed to allow the appeal and a Disputes Committee to be formed to hear the appeal.

2. Procedure for the Hearing of the Appeal

2.1 Following the July 2013 meeting of the Executive Council a Disputes Committee was formed for the purposes of hearing the appeal by GMB. The Disputes Committee proposed to approach the appeal as follows,

- The GMB would be requested to provide in writing the grounds for their appeal on or before Friday 6th September 2013.
- A copy of the GMB document will be sent to UNITE who will be asked for comments in writing. The UNITE response should be sent to Congress on or before 13th September 2013 and a copy of the UNITE response will be sent to the GMB.
- A hearing would be organised and both sides will be given a further opportunity to outline their respective positions.
- Following the hearing the Disputes Committee will make a further report to the Congress Executive Council.

2.2 Both unions were advised of this proposed procedure. In line with the procedure GMB provided the Disputes Committee with a detailed document setting out the grounds for its appeal. This document was forwarded to UNITE. UNITE was requested, on numerous occasions, to provide a written response to the GMB document however no such response was received by the Disputes Committee.

2.3 The Disputes Committee invited both unions to attend a hearing on the 19th September 2013. Both unions agreed to attend however Congress was subsequently informed by GMB that they would not be in a position to attend on that date. Both unions were invited to attend a re-arranged hearing on the 25th October 2013 and both unions agreed to attend. However on the 22nd October 2013 UNITE informed Congress that it would not be in a position to attend the hearing on the 22nd October 2013. Congress sought the agreement of the GMB to a further deferral, however GMB would not agree.

2.4 In light of this the Disputes Committee decided to proceed as follows,

- The hearing planned for the 25th October 2013 would proceed, without UNITE in attendance. Following the hearing any material provided to the Disputes Committee by GMB would be forwarded to UNITE.
- The Disputes Committee would invite both unions to a further hearing.
- The Disputes Committee advised both unions that it was their intention to report to the Executive Council at its meeting scheduled for the 20th November 2013.

UNITE expressed its dissatisfaction with these arrangements however they were informed that in the absence of an agreement between the unions to a further deferral the Disputes Committee had no option but to proceed with the hearing on the 25th October 2013.

2.5 At the meeting on the 25th October 2103 the GMB outlined the grounds for their appeal. They provided the Disputes Committee with a copy of an email which they cited in support of one aspect of their evidence. This email was forwarded to UNITE and it was agreed with both unions that a further and final hearing would be held on 14th November 2013 and a report made to the Executive Council on the 20th November 2013.

3. Disputes Committee Report 01/13

3.1 The findings of Disputes Committee Report 01/13 are contained below.

3.2 The Disputes Committee finds that UNITE are in breach of the Constitution of Congress on the following grounds:

- UNITE did not advise all members and ex-members of GMB to resolve their differences with GMB.
- UNITE held a general meeting with members and or ex-members of GMB contrary to the constitution of Congress.
- UNITE wrote to the company seeking recognition contrary to the constitution of Congress.

The Disputes Committee has evidence of an orchestrated campaign on behalf of UNITE by elements both outside and inside the plant which falls very far short of good Trade Union practice. Not least of this was the unprecedented harassment of this Disputes Committee which was clearly led and directed by a UNITE Organiser. Disputes Committees

volunteer their services in order to see that our movement adheres to the highest standards. There can be no justification for union officials identifying Disputes Committee members as targets so that they can be subject to at best lobbying and at worst threats and harassment.

The Dispute Committee finds that GMB is correct in its assertion that the negotiating unit is the entire plant of some 750 workers. This would normally give protection to that union unless another union could show that it had applications from 80% of the negotiating unit which is not the position in this case. However for whatever reason GMB membership has almost collapsed and there seem little prospect now of them organising any significant section of the workforce.

Nor does the Disputes Committee believe that the melt down in GMB membership was a result of the actions of UNITE. GMB by its own admission never organised more than 50% of the workforce and over the last few years failed in its duty to properly represent the workforce.

The Disputes Committee nonetheless cannot disregard the potential consequences for trade union organisation and membership within the plant. By its own admission GMB did accept that there were problems with their engagement with its members which led to the dissatisfaction and dissension and ultimately significant resignations from the union. In arriving at its findings the Disputes Committee has had to take this into account and the unlikelihood of the disaffected GMB members ever returning to GMB membership.

Therefore this Disputes Committee finds that UNITE should be permitted to take into membership those who have applied into membership before 13th May. Both unions will register the membership and applications for membership from that date with Congress. Neither union will accept any transfer of membership after that date for a period of four years. The two unions are free to recruit non-union workers and new employees.

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UNITE can continue to seek recognition from the company in a way which will permit GMB to properly represent its residual membership in the company. If the company agrees to recognise UNITE all bargaining within the negotiating unit will involve the two unions.

Finally the Disputes Committee recommends that UNITE be required to formally accept that their Organisers will never again interfere in a workplace where another union has prior recognition without the strictest observance of the constitution and rules of Congress. UNITE should be required to explain the rules and constitution of Congress to its staff and issue instructions that these rules and the constitution be obeyed.

4. GMB Grounds of Appeal.

- 4.1 As previously mentioned the GMB provided the Disputes Committee with a comprehensive document setting out the grounds of their appeal.
- 4.2 The GMB appeal is based principally on the assertion that the original Disputes Committee acted beyond the scope provided to them in the Congress Constitution and the Guidelines pursuant to Paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution. The GMB assert that the original Disputes Committee found that UNITE were in breach of the Congress Constitution and had acted contrary to its provisions. GMB claim that in light of this finding UNITE should have been instructed to desist from organising workers in the employment concerned, instructed to cancel the membership of any worker who they had taken into membership in that employment and encouraged them to re-join the GMB and return to GMB the monies they collected from those members.
- 4.3 However GMB point out that instead of this course of action the original Disputes Committee, despite finding that UNITE were in breach of the Congress Constitution, choose to allow UNITE retain the workers they had recruited into membership and that UNITE should be recognised for collective bargaining purposes in the employment concerned.
- 4.4 GMB claim that the original Disputes Committee did not have the authority to make such a finding and acted beyond their remit.

5. UNITE Response

- 5.1 Despite numerous requests for them to do so, UNITE did not provide any written response to the GMB grounds of appeal.
- 5.2 At the hearing held on the 14th November 2013 they responded as follows in the paragraph 5.3 to below.
- 5.3 UNITE do not agree that the original Disputes Committee acted beyond their remit. In support of this claim they cite paragraph 9 of the Guidelines pursuant to paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution. The provisions of this paragraph are as follows, "In cases where a single union represents all the unionised workers in an establishment and some or all of the non-union staff seek to become members of another union, the provisions of paragraph 46 may be invoked to prevent that union from organising those workers. However, the Disputes Committees may, in exceptional circumstances, consider allowing another union to organise in such circumstances, if satisfied that no realistic possibility exists of those workers joining the first union. Regard should also be had to the numbers involved and the proportion to the overall workforce. In such cases Disputes Committees may require that satisfactory joint working arrangements be established between the unions concerned. In these circumstances a Disputes Committee may also recommend that Congress conduct a ballot of all of the workers concerned in an employment to decide which union should organise and represent the workforce". UNITE argue that in coming to their finding the original Disputes Committee must have had regard to this provision.
- 5.4 UNITE also drew to the attention of the Disputes Committee the provisions of The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. UNITE argue that the provisions of this Order limit the capacity of unions in Northern Ireland to implement decisions of Disputes Committees particularly in circumstances where a union is directed to cancel the membership of a worker or workers.

6. Findings

- 6.1 The Disputes Committee has given careful consideration to the arguments made by GMB and UNITE. We have found as follows:
- 6.2 Firstly it is asserted by the GMB that the original Disputes Committee acted beyond the scope provided to it by the Congress Constitution. The provisions of paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution are an integral part of the Congress Constitution. The fact that the Congress deemed it necessary to develop guidelines to assist unions and Disputes Committees to understand its application indicates the importance that it attaches to the proper functioning and interpretation of the rule. However paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution and the guidelines pursuant to it do not exist in isolation. Paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution must be considered in the context of the wider objects and functions of Congress. Specifically, paragraph 7(c) of the Constitution records as one of the functions of Congress as follows, "to encourage the effective organisation of workers in appropriate unions; to assist in promoting closer co-operation between Unions and organic unity within the movement; to endeavour to reconcile these views and relationships of Unions organising similar classes of workers and by the encouragement of amalgamation to reduce the number of such Unions; to provide for the transfer from one Union to another and generally help strengthen trade union organisation and co-operation between Unions." It is therefore entirely proper for a Disputes Committee to recommend to the Executive Council measures of the type recommended in Disputes Committee Report 01/13.
- 6.4 Secondly, it is clear from the evidence presented at the hearings and from the documents presented to the Committee that GMB had for whatever reason lost the confidence of a good number of the workforce in the employment concerned. It is further clear that there are a good number of workers in the employment concerned that would not be willing to join or re-join GMB. It is also clear that some workers in this employment have retained their membership of GMB. During the hearing on the 25th October 2013 the Disputes Committee sought the view of GMB as to the likely result if UNITE withdrew from organising workers in the employment concerned. GMB refused to give an opinion. The Disputes Committee have formed the view that there are a large number of the workforce will not join or consider re-joining the GMB.

- 6.5 Thirdly it is asserted by UNITE that The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, may prevent it from implementing a Disputes Committee finding that requires it to return members it has taken into membership to another union. The Disputes Committee is perfectly clear that if the procedures in Paragraph 46 of the Congress Constitution are adhered to by all Unions it will mean that members transferring from one union to another should only do so by agreement between the Unions or following a Disputes Committee finding.
- 6.6 Fourthly, there is no doubt, that UNITE by their actions in this case have seriously breached the provisions of the Congress Constitution.
- 6.7 While the Disputes Committee understands the motivation and reason for the findings in the Disputes Committee Report 01/13, it cannot ignore the behaviour of UNITE in this case. For this reason the Disputes Committee upholds the GMB appeal.
- 6.8 The Disputes Committee is concerned at the deterioration in the relationship between the two Unions involved in this case. The Disputes Committee recommends to the Executive Council that it appoints a person to act as a mediator between the two Unions with a view to restoring normal working relations.

APPENDIX 8 – APPEALS BOARD REPORT (2013-2015)

The Appeals Board is mandated to deal with complaints by groups of members for lack of service, or by individuals in cases of expulsion. The mandate of the Board is set out in Article 48 of the Constitution of Congress. The Board consists of A Hall and J Dawson. Members of the executive council are nominated to act as substitutes when the need arises. Peter Rigney, Industrial Officer is Secretary to the Board. The Board is required by its Constitution to effect an amicable settlement between the Union and the members in dispute. Many complaints received are from individuals and are not within the scope of the Board. However, every effort is made to secure a settlement through correspondence in these cases.

During the period under review three cases were referred to the Board, and considered at a meeting on 26 February 2015.

Temple v CWU – Expulsion

The Board considered the details of the case, and noted that a decision was made to expel Mr Temple by the Dundalk Branch Committee based on statements he made regarding the Branch Treasurer.

This decision was upheld on appeal by the NEC of the union. The Board noted that the Branch Treasurer took part in the committee that decided upon the expulsion of Mr Temple. This was not disputed by the union. On the basis of natural justice the decision of the Branch Committee was flawed, and actions flowing from it are flawed. The Board so decide.

Deegan and others v BATU

The Board considered the complaint, which was that BATU had by their actions caused the two complainants to be dismissed by the builder. The Board noted that the complainants had taken a case to the EAT and had been awarded a substantial amount in compensation. They had been unable to enforce this decision, as the builder had gone into liquidation, on the basis of the time elapsed since the events complained of, the Board decided it was not in a position to hear the case.

McGrath and others v TUI

The complainants claimed lack of service by the TUI arising from their redeployment from posts as lecturers in Athlone IT. This is additional to the complaints dealt with by the board in 2015. The Board decided that further details be requested from the complainants. The case continues at time of writing

AD

