



Speech: Minister of State Stanton	
Event	Autumn 2018 Diversity Charter Ireland signing event
Organiser	Diversity Charter Ireland
Date	17 th October 2018
Time	15:00 pm
Venue	Atrium, Department of Justice and Equality 51 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Check Against Delivery

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to join you here today for this Diversity Charter signing event. I thank Maria Hegarty and colleagues for inviting me to address you. The Diversity Charter is a mechanism for organisations to demonstrate their commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace and beyond. It's a way for businesses, voluntary organisations, and political parties to make a very visible commitment to become truly inclusive workplaces and to champion equality and diversity in everything they do. I am very pleased that the Department of Justice and Equality is able to support this initiative with grant funding from the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

I congratulate today's new signatories to the Charter: Camfil Ireland; S.S.E. Ireland; Enable Ireland; Fine Gael; and Tesco Ireland. All very different organisations, but sharing an understanding of the value of diversity and the importance of managing it positively and pro-actively for the benefit of all.

Each of your organisations is today taking a very important step that will have long lasting benefits, both for the organisation itself, and for those who work there and who will work there in the future. Not only are you tapping into the diversity advantage offered by the diverse

workforce we are fortunate to have here in Ireland, but you are also committing to effective diversity management, preventing discrimination and promoting equality within the different environments in which you operate. I commend you for taking this important step.

I also commend Diversity Charter Ireland for the work that you do in supporting signatories to the Charter and in encouraging new organisations to become signatories. You are vital champions of workplace diversity.

The Diversity Charter provides organisations with a framework for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace. It's worth reflecting on some of the commitments that signatories make. You commit to a corporate culture characterised by respect for diversity. You commit to equality and diversity training for your staff. You commit to non-discrimination in managing your staff throughout their careers. You commit to working to reflect society's diversity in your organisation. You commit to involving your staff, customers and suppliers on your diversity and inclusion journey. You commit to recording and publishing your progress. You commit to helping others on their diversity and inclusion journey. These are significant commitments and I applaud your leadership in making them.

Diversity is a fundamental characteristic of our people and therefore of our workforce. It brings great benefits. It broadens and deepens our skills base. Our migrant communities, for example, are active in all sectors of the economy, bringing their wealth of skills, experience and

talent to bear in diverse ways that we can all benefit from. Increased diversity brings with it both challenges and responsibilities. To ensure that we can fully realise the benefits of diversity in society, we must develop a greater focus on diversity in the workplace. The Charter is an excellent way to do this.

I view diversity as a strength, which can only serve to enrich the workplaces of 21st century Ireland, strengthen our position on the international stage, and benefit our society as a whole. Diversity in corporate governance and decision-making structures is particularly important, and it is this that drives transformative change.

This applies not only to the private sector, but also to the public sector and government. Public Sector organisations are bound by statutory duty to promote equality and human rights and to combat discrimination through their work. This is a powerful tool for promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. For example, the Public Appointments Service, which is responsible for the majority of civil and public service recruitment, has been tasked with ensuring that proactive outreach and support measures will be undertaken by all public sector employers to increase the number of persons from an immigrant background working at all levels in the civil service and wider public service.

The Public Appointments Service is also responsible for ensuring that State Boards have a 40% gender balance. The percentage of women members now stands at 40.7%. Achieving that target did not happen by accident. The Government took concerted action to

improve the gender balance across all State boards. 44% of those appointed or reappointed over the past six months have been women. Our focus now is on working to maintain that percentage and to build on it.

To help us in this work, we have a suite of National Equality Strategies in place to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and to combat discrimination. The Migrant Integration Strategy; The National Strategy for Women and Girls; The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy and the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, together provide us with a comprehensive framework for Government action in these areas. We have also begun to develop a National LGBT Inclusion Strategy and will shortly consult on this. Clearly, there is a synergy between our efforts at national strategic level and the aims of initiatives like Diversity Charter Ireland. It is only by working together across all sectors that we will make the kind of progress we need to make in these critical areas.

I hope this event will provide you all – new and existing signatories alike – with an opportunity for fruitful engagement to help you on your diversity and inclusion journey. I commend your commitment to Diversity and Inclusion and wish you every success on this important journey.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.