

PILN Bulletin, 19 April 2007

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1. Foy case back in court

The case of Lydia Foy started in the High Court again on Tuesday 17 April. Ms Foy is seeking to have her birth certificate amended to reflect her correct gender. This is a very important case for public interest law in Ireland and a full report is included in the next edition of FLAC News (available from FLAC on request).

2. Joint ICCL/IPRT/FLAC project on ICCPR

Ireland submitted its third Report under the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) to the United Nations Human Rights Committee at the end of February. The report is currently being prepared for publication and will be available in due course.

In conjunction with the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Irish Penal Reform Trust, FLAC is conducting research on civil and political rights in Ireland. The research will lead to a Shadow report responding to the Government's Third Report on Ireland's implementation of the ICCPR. This international human rights treaty sets out extensive rights, including the right to life, to freedom from torture and to a fair trial.

The research is being conducted by Edel Quinn, who will consult with a variety of groups about their experiences of civil and political rights in Ireland. Her work will assess how these rights impact the work of key stakeholders operating in areas particularly influenced by the ICCPR as well as that of lawyers working in criminal justice, immigration and credit and debt.

To learn more about the project, you can download the project leaflet (in PDF format) from the FLAC website.

3. Law Reform Commission – Third Programme of Law Reform

The Law Reform Commission is coming to the end of its Second Programme of Law Reform 2000 – 2007. It has started to identify topics to be included in its Third Programme of Law Reform, which will start next year. This simply lists areas of law to be examined by the Commission with a view to making suggestions for change. The LRC is interested in hearing about the laws that affect the daily lives of people. There is no requirement to have a background or knowledge of the law in order to attend.

It is holding a public consultation on law reform in Aula Maxima in University College Cork on Monday 30 April 2007, from 5 pm to 7 pm. This public consultation will provide an opportunity to suggest areas of law in need of reform and modernisation. Attendance is free and the meeting will be followed by a wine reception with finger food.

The final public consultation will take place in Dublin Castle on Wednesday 18 July 2007 at 9 am. To attend either event, call the LRC on 01-6377600 or by e-mail at info@lawreform.ie

4. Reminder: FLAC Seminar on Amicus Curiae Interventions

As evidenced by recent court cases, *amicus curiae* interventions can be a potentially powerful tool for the promotion of public interest law. Amicus Curiae briefs are filed in court proceedings by individuals or groups who are not party to a lawsuit, but who have a strong interest or expertise in the issues in the case, and who are invited by the court, or permitted by law, or who petition the court to make an intervention in the action. The "amicus" is considered to be a "friend of the court".

FLAC is hosting a seminar around the use and potential of *amicus curiae* interventions at the Park Inn Hotel, Smithfield, Dublin 7 on Monday 30 April from 2.30-5.30pm.

Speakers with experience of such interventions from England, Northern Ireland and Ireland will take part in the seminar. These include

- Mr Phil Shiner, Supervising Solicitor with [Public Interest Lawyers](#), UK
- Ms Eilis Barry, Senior Legal Adviser with the [Equality Authority](#), Ireland
- Ms Karen Quinlivan, Barrister, Northern Ireland.

For participating solicitors and barristers, CPD points are available.

To book your place please e-mail us at piln@flac.ie or phone us at 01-8745690.

5. Ireland signs International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Ireland was among the first countries to sign the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 30 March. The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006. It is the product of virtually unique collaboration between states, persons with disabilities and other civil society organisations, and the UN. It enters into force after ratification by 20 States, and will be a key instrument in facilitating millions of people with disabilities in achieving recognition of their dignity and the effective protection of their human rights. To learn more about it, please check the UN website at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/>

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