

ICCL CONSTITUTION

(as amended at the ICCL AGM – 25 June 2011)

1. NAME

The name of the organisation shall be the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) and, in the Irish language, An Chomhairle um Chearta Daonna.

2. AIMS

The aims of the ICCL are to:

- defend and promote civil liberties and human rights of both individuals and groups;
- defend and promote women's rights as human rights;
- defend and promote international standards for human rights and civil liberties in Ireland;
- inform public opinion on matters impacting on civil liberties and human rights;
- monitor the situation of human rights and civil liberties in Ireland;
- carry out research on issues impacting on human rights and civil liberties;
- influence decision-making in areas relating to civil liberties and human rights;
- develop links with other national and international organisations working in the sphere of human rights and civil liberties;
- take any steps incidental to the achievement of these aims.

3. FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

The ICCL shall be independent of all political and religious organisations and shall work actively to promote a tolerant, inclusive, pluralist and secular society in Ireland. It shall carry out its work in an egalitarian, pluralist and inclusive manner. All ICCL activities shall be carried out in accordance with the aims set out in this Constitution. Those aims apply to the internal structures, processes, activities and decision-making procedures.

4. STRUCTURES

4.1 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- (i) The power to decide the general policies of the ICCL shall be vested in the Annual General Meeting and the general membership shall be canvassed annually at the Annual General Meeting as to the areas of human rights and civil liberties which should be given priority in the ICCL's work for the following year. The Executive shall have discretion to work on other issues in the course of that year.
- (ii) The Annual General Meeting shall be held each calendar year within 18 months of the previous Annual General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting shall receive an annual report from the Co-Chairpersons on the activities of the Executive in the preceding year and an annual report from the Director of the ICCL on the core activities and finances of the ICCL during the previous year.
- (iii) The outgoing Executive shall designate the Chairperson of the Annual General Meeting.

- (iv) The audited accounts of the ICCL for the previous year shall be presented for adoption at the Annual General Meeting.
- (v) The new members of the Executive shall be elected and declared at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations must be made in writing prior to the Annual General Meeting. Nominations must be received in the Office of the ICCL by 5pm on the day before 3 working days before the date of the Annual General Meeting. Each nomination must be signed by two members of the ICCL and the nominee must consent in writing.
- (vi) The Executive shall give notice of the time, date and place of the Annual General Meeting to members and affiliated organisations at least four weeks before the intended date of the meeting.
- (vii) Members and affiliated organisations may propose motions to the Annual General Meeting, notice of which shall be given to the Executive at least two weeks before the meeting. Such motions shall be duly signed and seconded and no one member or affiliated organisation may move more than two such resolutions. A Standing Orders Committee consisting of 3 Executive members of the ICCL shall be drawn by lot at the beginning of the Annual General Meeting. At the discretion of this Standing Orders Committee, motions may be accepted at the Annual General Meeting.

4.2 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- (i) A Special General Meeting may be called in any of the following circumstances:
 - where the Executive so decides;
 - on receipt by the Executive of a written request from at least 50 members.
- (ii) Such written requests shall indicate the matters to be discussed at the Special General Meeting.
- (iii) At least four weeks notice shall be given of any Special General Meeting. This period may be reduced in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Executive.

4.3 AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Proposals for the amendment of the Constitution shall be submitted to the Annual General Meeting or to a Special General Meeting called for that purpose. At least four weeks notice of an amendment to this Constitution duly signed by at least two members or delegates of the ICCL shall be given to the Executive. Proposed amendments shall be circulated to members two weeks in advance of the general meeting. The Executive may propose amendments, provided members are given two weeks notice of such proposals. Proposed amendments shall be passed when a two-thirds majority of persons present and voting at the General Meeting vote in favour of the proposal.

4.4 VOTING

All Voting Affiliated Organisations with individual members will have the right to cast the number of votes indicated hereunder at any Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting. The number of delegates to which it is entitled shall not exceed the number of votes to which it is entitled:

- under 1000 members - 1 vote
- 1,000 - 5,000 members - 2 votes
- over 5000 members - 3 votes

The Executive at its discretion shall determine terms for organisations without individual paying members. Individual members of the ICCL shall have one vote.

4.5 EXECUTIVE

- (i) The Executive shall have control of the business of the ICCL subject to its obligation to report to the Annual General Meeting. The Executive shall have the power to make and carry out policy between General Meetings in so far as matters have not been covered by resolutions passed at the previous General Meetings. The Executive shall meet a minimum of five times in every calendar year.
- (ii) The Executive shall consist of at least 8 members and no more than 10 members:
 - 4 shall be men elected by the general membership at the Annual General Meeting.
 - 4 shall be women elected by the general membership at the Annual General Meeting.

The elections of the male and female members of the Executive shall be by proportional representation with a single transferable vote. Members of the Executive elected by the Annual General Meeting shall hold office for a period of two years.

As of 22nd February 2003, a person may serve as a member of the Executive for a maximum number of 7 consecutive years and may not thereafter serve as a member of the Executive until a two year period has elapsed.

Notwithstanding this term limit, a person who, on 22nd February 2003, was a member of the Executive may continue to serve as a member of the Executive until the date of the 2011 Annual General Meeting and may not thereafter serve as a member of the Executive until a two year period has elapsed. Fifty percent of the elected members of the Board shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting at any one time, 2 who shall be men and 2 who shall be women.

The Executive shall have the power at any time, and from time to time, to co-opt by majority-vote any member of the ICCL to be an Executive member as an addition to the existing Executive so long as the total number of the Executive Committee members does not exceed ten.

Decisions to co-opt a member will be taken for the purpose of

- maximising the diversity of the Executive's membership, and
- adding relevant experience and expertise to the Executive.

A co-opted member of the Executive shall hold office only until the next Annual General Meeting.

- (iii) No person may serve on the Executive unless a paid up member of the ICCL. His or her membership of the Executive shall cease if and when his or her

- membership of the ICCL ceases. A quorum of the Executive shall be 50% of its members plus one. Executive members will forfeit their seats on the Executive after a continuous absence, without apology, from 2 meetings.
- (iv) Vacancies on the Executive shall be filled by further co-option provided that the number of men or women members of the Executive shall not be reduced below 4.
 - (v) The Director (see Section 4.6 below) shall attend Executive meetings but shall not have any right to vote at any Executive meeting. Other staff may attend Executive meetings at the request of the Executive but shall not exercise any right to vote at any such meeting.

4.6 ICCL LIMITED

- (i) Members of the Executive elected on or after 24th February 2006 will be required to become a Company Director of ICCL Ltd., a company established with the same aims as ICCL and which will carry out the operational requirements of ICCL and employ the staff required to fulfil these functions. When a person ceases to be a member of the Executive, she/he will be deemed to resign as a Company Director of ICCL Ltd, with immediate effect.
- (ii) The business of ICCL Ltd. will be managed by a Board of Directors elected by the members of ICCL Limited.
- (iii) The Board of ICCL Ltd. shall approve the creation of such staff posts as are necessary for the carrying out of the functions of the Company and the Council and shall be responsible for the business administration of the ICCL. To this end the Board shall appoint a Director of ICCL.

4.7 OFFICERS

The ICCL shall have Co-Chairpersons. The Executive shall elect the Co-Chairpersons, one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, from its own number at the first meeting of the Executive immediately following the Annual General Meeting. The Executive shall set out in its standing orders the responsibilities of each of the officers. The Executive shall fill a vacancy in any office as it arises.

4.8 BRANCHES

- (i) The Executive may approve the establishment of branches of the ICCL either on a geographical basis or among particular groups, for example, students. All paid up individual members of the ICCL who are, as the case may be, ordinarily resident in the geographical area, or members of the relevant group, prescribed for a branch by the Executive shall be entitled to become members of that branch.
- (ii) Branches shall consist of paid-up members of the ICCL and shall adhere to the general principles and policies of the ICCL. Each branch shall be responsible to the Executive of the ICCL. Each branch shall work to further the aims of the ICCL as set out in this Constitution and the Executive shall have the power to disband any branch forthwith where that branch has been engaged in any activity detrimental to the ICCL or to the achievement of the aims of the ICCL.

- (iii) Where it is proposed that a branch should be disbanded, at least three representatives of that branch shall be entitled to appear before the Executive before such a decision is taken. An appeal may be taken against a decision to disband a branch by any five or more paid up individual members of the ICCL who are members of that branch immediately before it was disbanded. The appeal shall be considered by a committee of five persons who shall be elected at the next occurring General Meeting. Members of the Executive and former members of the Branch shall be ineligible for membership of that committee.

4.9 STANDING COMMITTEES

- (i) Standing Committees may be established with the approval of the Executive. The role of such committees shall be to provide advice and support to ICCL Ltd staff, branches and working groups on its own area of expertise. Standing Committees shall advise the Director and the Executive of their recommendations in relation to work within their areas of expertise. These committees shall make regular reports to the Director and shall be disbanded after 6 months of inactivity.
- (ii) Each Standing Committee shall work to further the aims of the ICCL as set out in this Constitution and the Executive shall have the power to disband any Standing Committee where that Standing Committee has been engaged in any activity detrimental to the ICCL or to the achievement of the aims of the ICCL. Where it is proposed that a Standing Committee should be disbanded, at least three representatives of that Standing Committee shall be entitled to appear before the Executive before such a decision is taken. An appeal may be taken against a decision to disband a Standing Committee by any five or more paid up individual members of the ICCL who were members of that Standing Committee immediately before it was disbanded. The appeal shall be considered by a committee of five persons who shall be elected at the next occurring General Meeting. Members of the Executive and former members of the Standing Committee shall be ineligible for membership of that committee.

4.10 WORKING GROUPS

- (i) Working Groups may be established with the approval of the Executive to work on such areas of concern as may be highlighted by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Each working group shall have a specific remit and time limit. Each working group shall be responsible to and make regular reports to the Executive of the ICCL. Members shall be drawn from the general membership, where possible.
- (ii) Each Working Group shall work to further the aims of the ICCL as set out in this Constitution and the Executive shall have the power to disband any working group where that working group has been engaged in any activity detrimental to the ICCL or to the achievement of the aims of the ICCL. Where it is proposed that a Working Group should be disbanded, at least three representatives of that group shall be entitled to appear before the Executive before such a decision is taken. An appeal may be taken against a decision to disband a group by any five or more paid up individual members of the ICCL who were members of that Working Group immediately before it was disbanded. The appeal shall be considered by a committee of five persons who shall be elected at the next occurring General Meeting. Members of the

Executive and former members of the Working Group shall be ineligible for membership of that sub-committee.

4.11 WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

There shall be a Women's Committee of the ICCL whose membership shall be open to all women members of the organisation. The Women's Committee shall have the right to express its views to the Executive on any matter of policy that affects women. It shall also have the right to convene meetings of women members of the ICCL or other meetings, which may be open only to women, and this shall not be regarded as discriminatory or contrary to ICCL policy.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the ICCL is open to all persons who are concerned about civil liberties and human rights in Ireland, and who accept this Constitution. Membership of ICCL shall involve acceptance of the aims and founding principles of the ICCL and agreement not to engage in activity aimed at damaging the work of ICCL. The Executive shall have the discretion to refuse membership to a person by a two-thirds majority of Executive members present and voting at the meeting at which the application is considered. Where it is proposed to refuse individual membership under this sub-section, that individual, or a person nominated by that individual shall be entitled to appear before the Executive before such a decision is taken. An appeal may be taken against a decision to refuse the membership to an individual by the individual concerned.

5.2 AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Affiliation to the ICCL shall be open to all organisations, national, regional or branches thereof who accept this Constitution and whose affiliation is approved by the Executive. There shall be 2 categories of affiliated organisation. An organisation may be affiliated with voting rights (to be known as a Voting Affiliated Organisation) or without voting rights (to be known as a Non-Voting Affiliated Organisation). All applications for affiliation by organisations shall be placed before the Executive at its next meeting. The Executive, in its discretion, acting in accordance with the aims and founding principles of the ICCL shall decide the category of affiliation into which the organisation is accepted. Refusal to accept an application for affiliation of a national, regional or other organisation, or to change the category of affiliation requested by a national, regional or other organisation shall be by a two-thirds majority of members of the Executive present and voting at the meeting at which the application is considered.

5.3 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR AFFILIATION

The Executive shall have power to terminate the membership of any individual or the affiliation of any organisation whose continued membership or affiliation is not conducive to the best interests of the ICCL in the opinion of two-thirds of the Executive present and voting at the meeting of the Executive at which the matter is considered. Where it is proposed that the membership of any individual or the affiliation of any organisation should be terminated, that individual, or a person

nominated by that individual, or, in the case of an organisation, at least three representatives of the organisation shall be entitled to appear before the Executive before such a decision is taken. An appeal may be taken against a decision to terminate the membership of an individual or the affiliation of an organisation by the individual or organisation concerned. The appeal shall be considered by a committee of five persons who shall be elected at the next occurring General Meeting. Members of the Executive shall be ineligible for membership of that committee.

6. FINANCE

6.1 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Executive shall control and be answerable for the receipt and expenditure of ICCL funds. The Executive shall decide the cheque-signing authorities.

6.2 SUBSCRIPTION AND AFFILIATION FEES

The rate of subscription and affiliation fees shall be decided by the Executive.

6.3 AUDITOR

An auditor shall be appointed annually by the Executive. Her or his duty shall be to audit the accounts of the ICCL prepared by the Director and her/his staff. The Executive shall arrange for the funds of the ICCL to be deposited with a bank and make other arrangements for the proper administration of the ICCL's finances.