

Reform of Marriage Law - Update November 2004

After consultations with various interested groups, the Interdepartmental Committee on the Reform of Marriage Law published a set of discussion/position papers (which are also available on this page).

This Committee furnished a report to Government on the reform of marriage law at the end of 2003. The proposals contained in that report formed part of the Civil Registration Bill 2003, which proposed a radical reform of the civil registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The Bill was passed by the Oireachtas (the Irish Parliament) at the end of February 2004. Copies of the Civil Registration Act 2004 are available from the Government Publications Sales Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Phone +353-1-6476834//35/36/37.

The General Register Office is currently preparing to decentralise its office from Dublin to Roscommon early next year (2005) and this involves considerable effort to ensure the transfer of skills and corporate knowledge to the new team. Work is continuing on the completion of the implementation of a major computerisation of the entire civil registration system and maintaining our existing services such as Certificate production etc.

The General Register Office now has considerable work to do with regard to putting the new legislation into effect. Work on implementing the non-marriage provisions of the new Act is well advanced and this has to be completed to coincide with decentralisation.

A Marriages Working Group has been established for the purpose of implementing the new marriage procedures and to deal with such issues as preparation of statutory regulations, guidelines and detailed procedures; establishment of a register of solemnisers, to be nominated by religious bodies and registration authorities; training of registrars issues related to venues for the solemnisation of marriage and the further development of the computer system to incorporate the new marriage provisions introduced by the Civil Registration Act.

The General Register Office is unable to give a specific date for implementation of the new marriage procedures, but it is likely to be in the latter part of 2005. We intend to give as much notice as possible, recognising the fact that people make arrangements for their marriages well in advance of the event. We would also like to assure the public that a comprehensive public information campaign will be undertaken at the appropriate time.

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