



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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White Paper on Fair Employment

Government Statement

The Government have consistently emphasised the urgency of bringing to an end the widespread and persistent discrimination in employment experienced by the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. In particular, they have pressed at recent meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference for comprehensive and effective new fair employment legislation to be adopted as soon as possible. The White Paper published today represents a further step towards the enactment of legislation.

The White Paper helps to clarify the manner in which the proposed new legislation will tackle the problem of religious discrimination in employment. There is much in the Paper that is positive and with which the Irish Government can agree. There remain some areas where the legislative intentions are not entirely clear or where the proposals, in their present form, appear to fall short of what is required. These include the precise type of affirmative action which will be provided for in the new legislation, in particular the use of goals and timetables and outreach measures.

The extensive discussions which have taken place in the framework of the Anglo-Irish Agreement on issues covered in the White Paper will continue over the coming months in accordance with the commitment expressed in the communique of the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference "to eliminate discrimination and establish fair patterns of employment in Northern Ireland".