

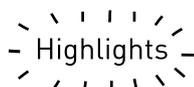
# Ireland



Women in decision-making: **0.25/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.5/5**

Violence against women: **1.25/5**



**15%** women  
in parliament

**9%** women  
on boards and no  
women presidents  
of the largest  
companies

**67%** of  
dependent elderly  
persons receive  
formal care

**10.3%** of  
women over 65 are  
at-risk-of poverty;  
no gender gap

**27.6%**  
gender gap in the  
employment rates  
of women and men  
with children  
under 12

Abortion is only  
permitted to save a  
woman's life

## TRENDS:



The February 2011 Programme for Government contained many commitments related to gender equality, including a constitutional convention to review sexist clauses in the Constitution, the introduction of universal health care, gender quotas for political parties and state boards and legislation to prohibit Female Genital Mutilation.

The Irish government adopted quota legislation in December 2011, requiring that all political parties have 30% women candidates by the next election or their state funding will be cut.

A number of high profile women have been appointed to top jobs in the judicial and legal system, including the first female Attorney General, President of the Supreme Court and Director of Public Prosecutions. However, every other level of the court and judicial system remain male-dominated.



The austerity measures in Ireland are having a disproportionate impact on women. The 2012 budget hit women and children hard with cuts to benefits for lone parents, pension entitlements for older women and women's organisations. The government funding strategy is leading to the decimation of the women's sector in Ireland and greatly affecting women's civic and political participation in public life.

## UNDERSTANDING IRELAND

State companies are required to have at least 40% women on their Boards.

The constitutional right to an abortion in Ireland is very limited, covering only risk to the life of the woman including the risk of suicide. It remains illegal to perform an abortion in cases of pregnancy by rape, danger to the health of the mother and fatal foetal abnormalities. 4,000 Irish women travel to the UK for abortions every year. In 2010, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Ireland's failure to implement the existing constitutional right to a lawful abortion when a woman's life is at risk violates Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).<sup>1</sup> The Irish government in the ECHR case could not point to 1 single abortion that had been carried out in the State under the limited constitutional right to an abortion in life-threatening pregnancies.

Maternity leave in Ireland is relatively generous at 26 weeks, but remuneration is low at 80%. Consequently, many women quit their jobs, producing a large gender employment gap. Only 23% of children under 3 are in formal childcare.

Regarding violence against women, it is estimated that every fifth woman experiences domestic violence during her lifetime. In 2010, there were 1,545 admissions of women and 2,355 admissions of children to refuge in Ireland. A survey in a Dublin maternity hospital found that 1 in 8 women questioned had experienced abuse while they were pregnant. Since 1996, 186 were women murdered in the Republic of Ireland. In resolved cases, 53% of women were killed by their current or former partner. Almost 1/4 (23.6%) of perpetrators of sexual violence against women were intimate partners or ex-partners.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [2011] 53 ECHR 13; [2010] ECHR 2032.

<sup>2</sup> Women's Aid Ireland