



RECEIVED
02 AUG 2004

14 May Street • Belfast • BT1 4NR • Northern Ireland

Tel. (028) 9031 0862 • Fax.(028) 9031 4975

e-mail: ouni@iol.ie

www.ouni.ie

Araby House • 8 North Richmond Street • Dublin 1 • Ireland

Tel. (003531) 856 0088; Fax. (003531) 856 0090

e-mail: inou@iol.ie

www.inou.ie

ORGANISATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED NORTHERN IRELAND

30th July 2004

**The Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Temple Court
39, North Street
Belfast
BT1 1NA**

To whom it may concern,

The Organisation of the Unemployed: Northern Ireland (OUNI) wish to make brief comments regarding the 'Progressing a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland – An Update' document.

Firstly, we welcome this publication. It was accessible in terms of the language used and explained the key problems different groups, political parties and individuals had with some aspects of the proposed Bill. This has been useful in enabling OUNI to understand the fears some have in particular with the inclusion of socio-economic rights in the final Bill of Rights.

The Human Rights Commission will be aware that OUNI undertook an extensive consultation with its affiliate members, unemployed people and others who experienced social and economic marginalisation during 2001. A Consultation Report on Socio-Economic Rights and the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights was produced and forwarded to the Commission in February 2002. During this process we held 5 seminars in different locations throughout the regions. The objectives of the seminars were to heighten awareness around the proposed Bill of Rights and to consult as to the need for the inclusion of socio-economic rights and the content of such rights. In all of the seminars there was widespread support for the inclusion of socio-economic rights.

We have read with interest the Commission's proposals regarding the three possible ways forward with regards to the inclusion/enforcement of social and economic rights and agree most with option three – the adoption of a mixed approach – insisting that minimum standards be directly enforceable but requiring other standards to be achieved progressively over time in other ways. However, we remain somewhat confused as to what 'option 3' exactly entails and believe it should be explained more fully. It is clear from ongoing discussions and debates particularly within political

parties that more work needs to take place around both the content and inclusion of social and economic rights in the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights. We acknowledge that the current climate is not the most appropriate, particularly in the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Notwithstanding this however, our consultation project with people who experience social and economic marginalisation in this region has shown that there is a strong desire for the inclusion of socio-economic rights.

In conclusion, the Organisation of the Unemployed: N.I. agree that Option 3 should be employed in the context of the inclusion of Social and Economic rights but that how this would be operationalised should be further defined and explained.

Yours faithfully,



Lynn Carvill
Co-ordinator