

Equality Rights Alliance

The Equality & Rights Alliance (ERA) was established in August 2008 following reports of a merger of five State bodies, including equality and human rights bodies. This move was widely seen as an attempt by Government to undermine the effectiveness of statutory bodies charged with promoting equality, preventing discrimination and protecting human rights.

The merger did not go ahead but was instead replaced, in Budget 2009, with savage budget cuts of 43% to The Equality Authority and 24% to the Irish Human Rights Commission meant that they cannot function as they need to.

Equality & Rights Alliance (ERA) is a coalition of 166 civil society groups and activists (NGOs including CIL, trade unions, academics and individual activists) working together to protect and strengthen the statutory equality and human rights infrastructure. ERA was formed to resist cutbacks in the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable in society. The members of ERA represent older people, women, families, children, people with disabilities, carers, immigrants, workers, gay, lesbian and bisexual people, Travellers and many others who have been deprived of the benefits of Ireland's economic boom. In these changed times, it is fundamentally wrong that they should be the first to suffer.

ERA has set out the organisational, legislative, and most importantly, human costs of cutting back on the protection of rights.

The mission of the ERA is to defend and strengthen equality and human rights in Ireland by building a strong alliance of civil society groups that will hold the Government and State bodies accountable for the Irish equality and human rights infrastructure.

On February 14th the Rev. Jessie Jackson arrived in Dublin to launch the ERA Roadmap to ‘A Strengthened Equality and Human Rights Infrastructure in Ireland.’

The Roadmap sets out a number of key demands in the disability arena including the right of individuals to challenge their needs assessment and subsequent decisions concerning service delivery before the Equality Tribunal instead of the current internal review system. The international human rights legal principles of progressive realisation and non-regression need to be built into the Disability Act. The provisions of the Disability Act need to be commenced for all age groups and not just those under five years of age.

For further information see www.eracampaign.org