



A Fixed Star

NEWSLETTER OF THE SVP SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POLICY COMMITTEE
**Special Issue on New Social Partnership Agreement:
'Towards 2016'**



SVP - A Social Partner

Many members may not be aware that since the late 1990s the Society has been deeply involved in the Social Partnership process. The Society is an important and active member of the Community and Voluntary Pillar. There are currently 15 other organisations involved in the C & V Pillar, and other Community and Voluntary organisations may join in Autumn 2006.

The Agenda for Social Partnership Project Team

SVP has been actively developing its views on social policy in order to persuade Government and others to tackle disadvantage in ways we feel are most effective. Policies include welfare and low pay; housing and homelessness; education and health services; energy and waste costs; rural issues and migrants. The National Social Justice and Policy Committee (NSJPC) spearheads this work on behalf of the Society. Within the NSJPC, there are two project teams of the Three Year Plan – the *From The Ground Up* Project Team and the *Agenda for Social Partnership* Project Team.

The *Agenda for Social Partnership* Project Team supports the Society's social policy staff in participating in the social partnership negotiations and involvement with monitoring work under the Agreements. Its members are Madeline Mellet, Stuart Kenny, Roisin Boland, Margaret Burns, John Monaghan and Muiris MacCarthaigh (chair). John-Mark McCafferty provides secretarial support and advice to the team, and is the main staff representative of the SVP in Social Partnership.

The National Management Council (NMC), comprising the National Board and the thirteen Regional Presidents, has responsibility for deciding on whether to ratify the new agreement. This will probably take place in late August '06, just before the national member's information seminar on Social Partnership.

Towards 2016: New 10 Year Agreement on Social Partnership

On the 14th June, Government and Social Partners completed talks on a new 10-year social and economic framework for Ireland. *Towards 2016* has two parts:

Part 1 is concerned with developing social and economic issues in tandem through a new structure known as the 'lifecycle framework'. This framework considers the provision of social services to children, people of working age, older people and people with disabilities.

Part 2 is concerned with pay and work-related issues, including employment rights and compliance. While not as concerned with social policy issues as Part 1, there are nonetheless issues of interest to the Society in it, including the rights of migrant workers.

A formal review of the new Agreement will take place in 2008. This agreement is to run for 10 rather than the usual 3 years. For the SVP, it offers a vehicle for developing social policy in favour of those we represent, but also poses serious commitment of time and resources. We will also continue to use other means to pursue our social justice agenda, including our annual pre-Budget submission campaign.

View the entire Agreement on the web:
<http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp?locID=181&docID=2755>

**Members' Seminar on Social Partnership & Policy: Saturday 2 September, 9.30 am - 3 pm
Aisling Hotel, Parkgate Street, Dublin 7 - between Heuston & Museum Luas Stops (Red Line)**

The Agenda for Social Partnership Project Team is delighted to announce this year's national members' seminar on the new Social Partnership Agreement, *Towards 2016*. The purpose of the seminar is to inform SVP members about the new Agreement and its implications, and will provide members with an opportunity to input into the Society's social justice and policy work including the 2007 Pre-Budget Submission. Dermot McCarthy, Secretary General of the Department of An Taoiseach is Keynote Speaker, and will talk about what the new Agreement means for those we assist. **Please see the accompanying schedule for the day, fill in the tear-off slip included and send to: Patricia Mooney, SVP National Office, 8 Cabra Road, Dublin 7. Places are limited so do book early!**

Towards 2016: Some Positive Developments and Some Concerns

Positive Developments ☺	Concerns we have ☹
<p>Income Adequacy and Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on a second tier child income support will be completed within one year ▪ Commitments to tackle barriers to take-up of employment ▪ Stronger Provisions on Employment Rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Office of the Director for Employment Rights Compliance ▪ Strengthening Penalties and Redress ▪ Regulating Employment Agencies and Agency Workers ▪ Employment Permits Bill to be enacted ▪ Re-commitment to €200 per week for social welfare pensions by 2007 	<p>Income Adequacy, including Energy & Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adult Welfare Rate commitment very ambiguous. No clear monetary targets for Social Welfare ▪ No explicit commitments to promote or advertise welfare entitlements ▪ Nothing strong on energy or waste management in terms of domestic charges; No 'Poverty Proofing'. ▪ Waste is no longer on this agenda
<p>Housing, Homelessness and Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Housing Commitments 3000 units higher than Department of Environment's own Strategy (2007 – 09) ▪ Regeneration and remedial commitments for Local Authority Accommodation ▪ Commitment on Private Rented Sector standards regulation by local authorities ▪ Elimination of phenomenon of homeless persons in long-term homeless hostels by 2010 ▪ National Homelessness Consultative Forum to be established ▪ Implementation of the Local Authority Traveller accommodation programmes 	<p>Housing, Homelessness and Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NESI Social Housing targets (10,000 annually) mentioned, but not committed to ▪ The new Rental Accommodation Scheme, mentioned in this section, has had a low take up due to the poor quality of dwellings
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Range of 'Early Childhood Development' commitments in urban / town primary school communities ▪ 100,000 childcare places (of all types) over the next 10 years ▪ An additional 100 posts for the National Educational Welfare Board and the National Educational Psychological Service by 2009 ▪ Pupil Teacher Ratios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 28:1 (Primary) by the 2006/07 Session ▪ 27:1 (Primary) by the 2007/08 Session 	<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deletion of 'Early Childhood Care and Education' (ECCE) from Government's own text ▪ No commitment to Family and Child Centres in disadvantaged areas to provide for early years ▪ No commitment to Early Childhood Provision in rural communities ▪ No further enhancement of School Books Grants Scheme ▪ No capital funding committed to for School meals
<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved figures for roll-out of Primary Care teams: 300 by 2008; 400 by 2009 and 500 by 2011 ▪ Food Poverty / Healthy Eating / Health Promotion Measures for Children and Adults of Working Age ▪ Delivering 'a significant number of' child and adolescent Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) ▪ Social Services Inspectorate to inspect all residential settings for children – legislation scheduled for Autumn 2006 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No stated expansion of the Full Medical Card. Only a Review to clarify entitlement to a medical card ▪ No explicit commitment to inspect residential services for older people
<p>Migrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Two: protection of 'workers from overseas'; Group on Labour Market Trends and Employment Standards • Integration measures: New, Comprehensive Framework to address integration policy in consultation with 'civil society' organisations 	<p>Migrants, including Asylum Seekers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nothing for Asylum Seekers / Direct provision ▪ Asylum Seeker Children still denied access to Child Benefit ▪ Integration measures not for asylum seekers
<p>Rural and Local Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubling of cash funding to the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) by 2007 and a steady increase in funding thereafter. Initiative to be made permanent by 2007. • Social Inclusion Programmes extended to half of all local authorities by the end of 2008 	<p><i>Contact Social Justice and Policy with any Persistent or Emerging Social Justice Issues</i></p>