

Brussels, 6 May 2008

Closure of the infringement procedure on the transposition in Ireland of Directive 2000/78/EC

The Commission has today decided to close the infringement procedure against Ireland on the issue of protection against discrimination based on religion.

On 27 November 2000 the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted Directive 2000/78/EC. This Directive lays down a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation. The deadline for Member States to adopt national legislation to comply with this Directive was 2 December 2003.

The Commission carefully examined the relevant national legislation and concluded that several Member States did not provide the entire protection required by the Directive. Thus, it decided to open infringement procedures for incorrect transposition of the Directive.

Concerning Ireland, in January 2007 the Commission sent a letter of formal notice raising doubts on the compatibility of some rules of the Irish anti-discrimination law with the Directive. One of these points concerned the protection against discrimination based on religion.

After analysing the reply of Ireland to its letter of formal notice, in February 2008 the Commission sent Ireland a reasoned opinion. Ireland answered by letter of 4 April 2008 providing additional explanations on several topics, including the one concerning the protection against discrimination based on religion.

After analysing the latest Irish reply, the Commission is satisfied with the measures that have been taken and has, therefore, decided not to pursue the infringement procedure on this point.

The procedure will therefore be closed regarding this issue.