

I respectfully suggest that:

1. the gardai who went to work in police forces in Australia in the early years of our Great Recession, particularly those enticed by advertisements aimed at them by the police force of at least one state/province in Australia, should be enticed back to Ireland now as their experience in a much larger English-speaking country - one that has a similar historical connection with Britain and the population of which includes a substantial multi-ethnic component - would be invaluable to policing here. They could also make a huge contribution to current efforts to reform the 'culture' of the Gardai Siochana by virtue of having been overseas for up to a decade and thus outside that 'culture' and away from its influences. I would guess that a considerable proportion of those who went would give serious consideration to an official invitation to return to Ireland to work in policing here, if the right offer was made to them - one taking account of their experience, their current rank, current pay and conditions and their future promotion prospects, for example - as many of them might well be contemplating a return already for personal reasons: eg their parents could now be quite elderly, their spouses and/or children may not like the climate over there (esp if they are fair-skinned), or they may not have adapted to the cultural differences.

2. More generally, I support the recommendations already made in the media and elsewhere that the day-to-day policing function of the Gardai Siochana be completely separated - as far as is practicable - from its functions in relation to state security and intelligence-gathering and that the Government's eventual aim should be to break up the Department of Justice into (at least) two separate departments, one for home affairs and one for other matters (including matters of state security, counter-terrorism, activities against subversion etc).

3. As ours is such a small society, any garda who releases into the public domain confidential information about any citizen that has come into his/her possession through work should be subject to a criminal prosecution with severe penalties including expulsion and even a term of imprisonment.

I was in the audience at the launch by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) of its submission to the Commission in Wood Quay Venue on Tuesday 30th January and I listened to the statements made by the panel of members of the Commission and to the questions from the audience afterwards and the ensuing discussion. I wish to express my support in a general way for the submission made by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (although I am not a member of the ICCL).

Kind regards

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