RACE AND IMMIGRATION IN THE
NEW IRELAND

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### CHRONOLOGY

1922  | The Irish Free State extends the right to birthright citizenship for all children born in the island of Ireland.

1937  | Constitution of the Republic of Ireland “renders concrete the boundaries of the imagined Irish nation,” declaring in Article 2 that “it is the entitlement and birthright of every person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, to be part of the Irish Nation.”

1973  | The Republic of Ireland joins the European Economic Community.

1989  | Highest level of net outward migration from the Republic on record (44,000)

1990  | The 1990s see the height of EU Structural Funds receipts by Ireland, covering the two programming periods of 1989–93 and 1994–99.

1991  | Combat Poverty Association publishes a report stating that the rate of poverty in Ireland is one of the worst in Europe.

1993 The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is established by the first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe. 91 asylum applications

1994 Ireland dubbed the “Celtic Tiger”  
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) is established. 362 asylum applications

1995 424 asylum applications

1996 Refugee Act 1996  
1,179 asylum applications

1997 SARI (Sport Against Racism Ireland) is formed as a direct response to the growth of racist attacks from a small but vocal group of people in Ireland.  
Race Relations Order (NI) outlaws discrimination on grounds of color, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origin in Northern Ireland. 3,883 asylum applications

1998 Good Friday Agreement amends Article 2 of Ireland’s constitution to recognize “the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose.”  
The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Inter-culturalism (NCCRI) is founded in the Republic of Ireland. 4,626 asylum applications

1999 In the decade between 1989 and 1999, Ireland’s GDP as percent of the EU average grows from 72 percent to 111 percent. 7,724 asylum applications

2000 Direct provision commences for asylum seekers in Ireland.  
Start of new period of EU Structural Funds (2000–2006). Given Ireland’s changed status from being one of the poorest
countries of the original fifteen members in 1994 to being one of the wealthier member states in 2000, Structural Funds are significantly reduced for this period.

A University of Ulster report shows that many ethnic minority groups experience racism in the workplace and schools as a way of life. The study, based on more than one hundred interviews with Chinese, African, Indian, and Traveller communities, finds that two-thirds of schoolchildren in the province from a minority ethnic background have been taunted by other pupils about their race, and 14 percent have been assaulted.

Ireland's Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act levels fines or imprisonment upon a person who organizes or knowingly facilitates the entry into the state of a person whom he or she knows to be or has reasonable cause to believe is an illegal immigrant or a person who intends to seek asylum.

10,938 asylum applications. There is widespread homelessness among asylum seekers.

2001 A Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) is set up within Ireland’s Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to coordinate services for refugees and asylum seekers and to implement integration policy for refugees. Its priorities are the protection of rights, the creation of opportunities to participate in economic, social, and cultural aspects of Irish society, and the development of a tolerant and inclusive society.

NCCRI begins logging reports of racist incidents in May: forty-one incidents are reported for the initial six-month period on record.

53.9 percent of Irish voters reject the Treaty of Nice in a referendum on June 7. The treaty would put in place institutional and other reforms to facilitate expansion of the European Union by up to twenty-seven members. In a joint statement on June 8, the Swedish prime minister, Göran Persson, representing the Swedish EU presidency, and Romano Prodi, the Commission’s president, state that the European Union will
“pursue enlargement negotiations with undiminished vigour and determination” and that the “objective of an enlarged Europe must be realized.”

10,325 asylum applications

2002 A second referendum on the Treaty of Nice is held October 18 and passes with 62.89 percent of the vote in favor. For the first time, Census of the Population includes a question on nationality. 5.8 percent of the population usually resident in Ireland is non-Irish nationals. 11,634 asylum applications marks the high point of applications.

2003 January Supreme Court ruling (Lobe v. Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform) finds that non-EU parents to Irish children do not automatically gain residency rights. In July 2003 the Irish government announces that immigrants can no longer seek residency based on their child’s Irish citizenship. Processing of 11,000 residency claims is suspended. Deportation orders are served to families who will be obliged to take their Irish-citizen child with them when they leave. Immigration Act Amendments to the 1996 Refugee Act introduced in the 2003 Immigration Act make provision for the minister to designate a list of “safe” countries of origin in relation to which asylum applicants must rebut the presumption that they are not refugees. The list of countries will be kept under review but from September 2003 include Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. 7,900 asylum applications

2004 Treaty of Accession brings the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia into the European Union. In Chen v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, the European Court of Justice rules that, as a citizen of the European Union, Catherine Chen had a right under Article 18 of the
EC Treaty to reside anywhere in the EU, and that denying residency to her parent(s) at a time when she is unable to look after herself would conflict with this basic right. Twenty-Seventh Amendment of the Constitution Act is approved by referendum with 79.17 percent of vote: “Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, a person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, who does not have, at the time of the birth of that person, at least one parent who is an Irish citizen or entitled to be an Irish citizen, is not entitled to Irish citizenship or nationality, unless provided for by law.”

In November, some seventy racist incidents are reported to NCCRI between May and October, the highest number on record.

Planning for Diversity: National Action Plan Against Racism defines integration as the “range of targeted strategies for the inclusion of groups such as Travellers, refugees, and migrants as part of the overall aim of developing a more inclusive and intercultural society.”

The NGO Alliance Shadow Report finds that government policies “have led to increased racism.” The report criticizes the government’s lack of leadership and action in challenging racism in Ireland and claims its failure to gather adequate data on racist incidents has led to a significant underestimation of their impact on victims and society in general. The report specifically argues that the government’s policy of segregating asylum seekers and refusing them the right to work has isolated them from the rest of society and helped to foster resentment against them as “spongers.”

Ireland has the second-highest export/GDP ratio among the twenty-five EU member states.

Asylum applications drop below 5,000 (to 4,766).

2005 With guidance from NCCRI, a National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR) for Ireland is launched with a focus on “reasonable and common sense measures to accommodate
cultural diversity,” including the emergence of an “intercultural workplace.”

Irish Born Child Administrative Scheme for Immigrant Residency allows immigrant parents to apply for a renewable form of residency based upon the parentage of an Irish-born child.

4,323 asylum applications

2006 Census finds a population of 4,239,848, with 14.68 percent foreign-born from 188 different countries; 10.1 percent of the population usually resident in Ireland are non-Irish nationals. In Dublin, over 15 percent of the residents are non-Irish nationals.

For the period 2002–2006, net inward migration peaks at 191,000, or 48,000 per year. Population growth peaks at 81,0000 per year.

4,309 asylum applications


3,985 asylum applications

2008 In June, Irish voters reject the Lisbon Treaty 53.4 percent to 46.6 percent. Ireland becomes the first member state to vote twice against an EU proposal. Research identifies loss of a commissioner, neutrality, workers’ rights, abortion, and corporation tax as subjects of importance, particularly to “no” voters.

Ireland becomes the first euro-zone country to enter the recession.

In the midst of the world financial crisis, Ireland’s government issues an unlimited guarantee to six main banks (Allied Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, Anglo Irish Bank, Irish Life & Permanent, Irish Nationwide Building Society, and the Educational Building Society). Ireland’s population of 4.5 million is shouldered with an enormous debt of €400 billion