

NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESS COUNCIL OF IRELAND AND THE PRESS OMBUDSMAN



New Press Council Chairman



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Mr Daithi O'Ceallaigh was appointed the Press Council's second Chairman with effect from September last.

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New members of Press Council

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He has had a distinguished diplomatic career spanning more than 35 years. He held posts in Moscow, London, Belfast, New York, Finland and Estonia, before serving as Ambassador to London for 6 years from 2001. He was subsequently appointed Ambassador to the UN and the World Trade Organisation and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Press Ombudsman decisions

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International Conference of Press Councils

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Mr O'Ceallaigh retired from the foreign service in 2009 and is currently Director General (part time) of the Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin.

Freedom of the Press

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He replaces the first Chairman of the Press Council, Professor Thomas Mitchell, whose chairmanship saw the establishment of the Council itself, and who also played a key role in the Press Industry Standing Committee, which drew up the details of the new structures of the Council and the Office of the Press Ombudsman.

Seminar on Children and the Press

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Two new independent members of the Press Council were also appointed during the Summer, following an advertisement and interviews. They are Professor Aine Hyland, Emeritus Professor of Education at University College, Cork, and Mr Eamonn Mac Aodha, Chief Executive of the Irish Human Rights Commission.

They replace two retiring members of the Council, former District Justice Mary Kotsonouris, and Mr Peter O'Mahony, former CEO of the Irish Refugee Council.



DECISIONS OF THE PRESS OMBUDSMAN

HAITI CONNECT AND THE IRISH MAIL ON SUNDAY

The Press Ombudsman decided not to uphold a complaint made by the head of a charitable organization, Haiti Connect, that an article published in the Irish Mail on Sunday about the organization breached the Code of Practice for Newspapers and Magazines

The charity raised money in Ireland to install wi-fi networks in Haiti, and the material published was based mainly on material that the complainant had posted on Twitter and Facebook and on his personal blog.

Click [here](#) for full decision

DR JAMES McDAID TD AND THE IRISH SUNDAY MIRROR

The Press Ombudsman decided that an offer by the Irish Sunday Mirror to publish a clarification in response to a complaint made by Dr James McDaid TD was sufficient remedial action on its part to resolve the complaint. The newspaper clarification concerned an article that it published about a minor car accident involving Dr McDaid.

Click [here](#) for full decision

MR JAMES GANTLEY AND THE SUNDAY WORLD

The Press Ombudsman decided to uphold a complaint made by Mr James Gantley about a statement published in an article in the Sunday World which said that Mr Gantley was one of seven major criminals summoned to a meeting in 1994 in connection with the selling of drugs.

Click [here](#) for full decision

All decisions of the Press Ombudsman and Press Council of Ireland are accessible [here](#)



INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF PRESS COUNCILS DISCUSSES INTERNET USE AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Delegates from more than 30 countries meeting as the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe held wide-ranging discussions on professional issues related to internet use and social networking sites at their annual meeting in Amsterdam in October. The meeting was attended on behalf of the Press Council and the Office of the Press Ombudsman by the new Chairman of the Council, Mr. Daithí Ó Ceallaigh, and Ms. Bernie Grogan, Case Officer.

Much of the discussion was taken up with the use of material posted on social networking sites, such as Facebook and Bebo. Delegates were reminded that even where a person has a high security setting on their social networking page, access to their material can be gained through 'friends' who do not have similar security settings.

Delegates noted that very careful consideration should be given by anyone posting material onto their social networking page. The following points should be borne in mind at all times:

- Think carefully about your security settings. Learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks, as they are there to help you control who sees what you post
- Think carefully about what you intend posting, and who you intend allowing access to it
- What you post online stays online, so think twice before posting pictures or any other material you wouldn't want a future employer to see
- Think carefully about who you allow to become your friend
- Remember that once you have accepted someone as your friend they will be able to access any information about you (including photographs) that you have marked as viewable by them.

The press – 'a queer little monster'



FREEDOM OF THE PRESS—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Parnell Summer School in August was the occasion for an address on “The Freedom of the Press by the Press Ombudsman, Professor John Horgan. In a wide-ranging speech dealing with contemporary issues and with the responsibilities such freedoms impose, he quoted a century-old definition of the press by the journalist, J B Hall, who was a major figure in reporting the tumultuous events in Irish political life at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Hall said:

“The Press is a queer little monster, half angel, half octopus. It is ‘backed like a weasel’; it is ‘very like a whale.’ Its eyes are countless like the stars, yet it is sometimes blind. Its ears are keen as the wind, yet it is often deaf. Its utterance is louder than the storm, yet it can speak in a still, small voice. It has nimble feet, made of wire, with which it skips from point to point of the earth’s surface, annihilating distance. It has arms so long that it can wrestle with and embrace the whole universe. It devours paper, it drinks ink. It has a consummate brain, an uncertain temper, a magnificent heart – and it never goes to bed.”

The Press Ombudsman’s speech, commenting on many contemporary issues, is accessible [here](#).

Seminar on Children and the Press



The Press Council of Ireland will hold a seminar in the Morgan Hotel, Fleet Street, Dublin 2, on Monday, 6 December on the subject of *Children and the Media*. Among the keynote speakers is a renowned Norwegian child psychologist who will present his research into ways in which the media in that country can have an impact on children.

Professor Magne Raundalen from the Centre for Crisis Psychology in Bergen is President of the Norwegian UNICEF Committee and an advisor to the Children's Ombudsman in Norway. His paper "*Children and the Newspaper – Not Seen, nor Heard, but Scared*" deals in particular with the effect which graphic headlines about violent crimes can sometimes have on vulnerable minors. It will be responded to by the Ombudsman for Children Emily Logan.

The seminar will also cover legal and professional issues surrounding coverage of children in the media, with contributions from media, legal and advocacy professionals. Paul Connors, Director of Communications with the HSE, and Fergus Finlay of Barnardos will conclude by highlighting lessons which can assist in formulating future policy in an Irish context.

The seminar takes place on Monday, 6 December at 11 am in the Morgan Hotel in Fleet Street and is open to members of the public. Places are limited and those interested in attending are required to register in advance with the Press Council of Ireland on (01) 6489130.

The full programme is accessible [here](#)