



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

Údarás Uchtála na hÉireann
The Adoption Authority of Ireland

Tuarascáil Bhliantúil
Annual Report
2015

Report of
Údarás Uchtála na hÉireann
Adoption Authority of Ireland
for 2015

To: Dr Katherine Zappone T.D.
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs,
Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Membership of the Board - 2015

To 31 October 2015

Dr. Geoffrey Shannon, Chairman

Ms. Helen Collins, Deputy Chairperson

Ms. Anne O'Flaherty

Dr. Imelda Ryan

Ms. Corrina Carrick

Ms. Siobhan Keogh

Dr. Ann McWilliams

From 1 November 2015

Dr. Geoffrey Shannon, Chairman

Ms. Orlaith Traynor, Deputy
Chairperson

Ms. Anne O'Flaherty

Dr. Imelda Ryan

Prof. Helen Buckley

Mr. Paul Harrison

Judge Patrick McMahon (Retd.)

Organisational Structure

Chief Executive Officer and Senior Management Team 2015

Chief Executive Officer:	Patricia Carey
Director of Operations and Corporate Services:	Kiernan Gildea
Head of Operations:	Anthony Abbott King
Principal Social Worker:	Celia Loftus

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Foreword

The Adoption Authority of Ireland (“AAI”) enjoyed a productive year in 2015. It welcomed the enactment of the Children and Family Relationships Act. This important legislation is child centred and will address a number of anomalies in family law. The Act provides a range of parenting options including guardianship, and rights for grandparents and other relatives. It heralds one of the most significant changes in family law in a generation. It places the best interests of the child at the centre of all decisions on custody, guardianship and adoption. The Act provides different pathways to parentage and will have significant implications for adoption practice.

For stepparents, the new legislation offers guardianship as an alternative child care option to adoption. It enables a wider range of unmarried fathers to become guardians of their children automatically. In this regard, the legislation imposes more onerous requirements on the Authority in respect of birth father consultation. In April, the Authority hosted a seminar on the Child and Family Relationships Act, which was addressed by both the Minister for Children and the Minister for Justice and Equality.

In 2015, the Authority continued to implement its role in the inspection of Accredited Bodies by conducting a pilot inspection of the Cúnamh adoption agency. This was a very successful inspection which will pave the way for the Authority implementing its full inspection regime in 2016 of all agencies accredited by the Adoption Authority.

A number of new initiatives were undertaken in 2015, including the appointment of a website company to develop, design and implement a new website for the Authority. This important communication tool will be launched in 2016.

As part of the continued development of the Authority as an independent body, a tender for provision of human resources services was also issued. This company will work with staff in 2016 to develop people and process human resources.

The Authority continues to work with the Department Children and Youth Affairs and TUSLA on planning for the implementation of Information and Tracing legislation. This legislation is long awaited by the various stakeholders and is necessary to comply with our international obligations and people’s right to information on identity. In October, the Authority made a detailed submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on the new legislation.

The AAI has operated a voluntary adoption contact register, the NACPR, since 2005. In excess of 11,000 are registered on the adoption contact register and since 2005 the Authority has facilitated matches from the register for 670 people.

In 2015, the tenth anniversary of the launch of the National Adoption Contact Preference Register (NACPR), the Authority piloted a programme to update information on the register. Six hundred of the 12,000 people registered were contacted in order to update their contact information. Of those contacted, 32% responded to change their contact preference level and update contact information.

The NACPR remains a critical tool in enabling agreed contact between adopted and birth relatives.

The Authority strongly encourages birth/natural parents in particular to register, as to date statistically more adopted people than birth/natural relatives are registered.

In 2015, the Authority continued to highlight the rights and best interests of children through all its work, and seeks to ensure that the voice of the child is heard in all adoption matters. In domestic adoption from long-term foster care, most children are of an age and level of maturity where they are consulted about the proposed adoption.

The AAI hopes that any new legislation will provide for the principles of openness and transparency reflected in Articles 7 and 8 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Authority welcomed a new Board, appointed by the Minister under the auspices of the State Boards Appointment Service on 1 November 2015, bringing vast experience to the work of the Authority.

In 2015, a much welcomed register of gender recognition of intercountry adoptions was signed into law. This register allows those with a valid gender recognition certificate with an entry in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions to apply for an entry in the Register of Gender Recognition of Intercountry Adoptions.

We would like to thank the staff and board members of the Authority for their commitment and dedication to the work of the Authority. It is very much appreciated.

We also wish to acknowledge the continued support and assistance of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the staff of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Dr Geoffrey Shannon
Chairman

Ms Patricia Carey
CEO

REVIEW OF THE AUTHORITY'S 2012-2015 CORPORATE PLAN

CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2015

The 2012-2015 Corporate Plan was the Authority's first corporate plan. It set out the direction of the fledgling organisation for the three years 2012-2015 and was an important milestone in the transition from its predecessor, the Adoption Board, to the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

Principles

The Authority identified four key principles which would guide its mission, its high level goals, its objectives and the work that was to be carried out. By applying these principles, the Authority would ensure that all of its decisions had the welfare of the child as its first and paramount consideration, in accordance with Section 19 of the Adoption Act 2010. The four principles identified were -

- *Child - Centeredness*
- *Excellence*
- *Accountability through Ethical Practice and Transparency*
- *Respect*

Goals

Four key goals and a number of specific objectives were identified to capture the focus of the Authority's efforts over the coming three year period.

Goal 1: To undertake and promote objective decision-making in adoption services in accordance with national and international law and evidence-based best practice.

Objectives	Results
<p>1. To make decisions regarding the granting of declarations of eligibility and suitability to adopt, the making of adoption orders and the recognition of intercountry adoption orders.</p>	<p>1. Routine applications are dealt with within three weeks of receipt. During the period of the plan 1,102 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted, 370 adoption orders were granted and 643 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.</p>
<p>2. To maintain the register of intercountry adoptions and the register of accredited bodies and to assist the General Register Office in maintaining the register of</p>	<p>2. New registers were established and are maintained up to date in real time. During the period of the plan, 13 accredited bodies were accredited.</p>

<p>adoptions in accordance with adoption law and related laws.</p> <p>3. To make decisions regarding the release of information to adult adoptees and birth parents, to maintain and administer the national adoption contact preference register (NACPR) and to provide an adoption information and tracing service to adopted persons and natural family members where no adoption agency was involved in the placement or where the Authority now holds the files of a defunct adoption society.</p> <p>4. To create and maintain comprehensive records in respect of all applications for Adoption Orders / requests for entry on the Register of Intercountry Adoption.</p> <p>5. To foster and develop national and international relationships with all stakeholders aimed at promoting excellence in adoption and adoption related services.</p>	<p>3. During the period of the plan, 2,622 applications for the NACPR were received and processed. These resulted in 312 matches. The absence of appropriate legislation severely restricted the ability of the Authority to provide a more comprehensive information and tracing service.</p> <p>4. All papers are scanned on a secure database in a timely fashion and indexed for ease of reference. Security protocols are regularly revised in respect of storage of paper files / back up of electronic files.</p> <p>5. Regular contact was maintained with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, HSE/Child and Family Agency, Department of Foreign Affairs and domestic stakeholder organisations. Regular contact was also maintained with the Hague Conference on Private International Law, UNICEF, and International Social Services. During the period of the plan, delegations visited the UK, USA, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam and Bulgaria. Administrative arrangements were agreed between Ireland and the USA and with Vietnam.</p>
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Goal 2: To build capacity for excellence in adoption services both internally and externally.

Objectives:

Objectives	Results
1. To build a capable and effective organisation that is well governed and efficient, both at Board and executive level.	1. Staffing levels and recruitment protocols were agreed with parent Department. Human Resource Management process went live. FOI/Data Protection Officers were appointed.
2. To achieve the best use of the financial and operational resources allocated to the Authority and to ensure value for money.	2. Financial procedures and procurement process were developed. Audit and Risk Committee established. Risk Register established and maintained.
3. To support and oversee the development of comprehensive, high quality and integrated adoption and post adoption services with our key statutory and non-statutory partners.	3. Guidelines for domestic adoption published. Training in the guidelines for adoption service providers was organised and implemented during May 2014, and ongoing phone support carried through to end of 2014.
4. To engage effectively with service users and their advocates, service providers, policy makers and the Government to bring about continuous quality improvements in our adoption services.	4. Regular meetings with stakeholders. Bi-annual information seminars held. Customer Charter and Complaints Procedure published.

Goal 3: To support, monitor, investigate and, where necessary, to secure quality standards in adoption services.

Objectives	Results
1. To provide a national quality standards framework for all adoption services.	1. Three standardised frameworks now available. Domestic –

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To accredit and register against approved standards all agencies providing adoption services. 3. To provide for regular monitoring and evaluation of registered services. 4. To take all necessary action to ensure compliance with standards and continuous improvement planning. 	<p>Intercountry – Information and Tracing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Applications processed and decisions made in a timely manner. 13 bodies accredited. 3. Inspection process designed and tested successfully. Bi-annual reporting established. 4. Inspection regime for 2016 notified to accredited bodies. One accredited body closed. Three failed to commence work.
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Goal 4: To provide a comprehensive information, research and communications framework to support the development of adoption policy, service delivery and continuous quality improvement.

Objectives	Results
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To compile and report on statistical information and planning / development aspects of service provision. 2. To undertake and promote research both internally and by engaging with appropriate academic institutions and professional bodies in order to establish appropriate research opportunities and protocols. 3. To provide information on adoption services, and other information directly to the general public, service users, professionals, policy makers and Government in a user-friendly format and to support others in the provision of information about adoption and adoption-related services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statistical information published quarterly on website. Annual Reports and Business Plans submitted to Department on time each year. 2. Research was undertaken in conjunction with the Irish College of General Practitioners, in the area of need for post adoption services nationally. Compilation of a post adoption services directory was initiated 3. Website updated regularly with appropriate notices.

<p>4. To promote informed and considered analysis and debate on adoption issues.</p>	<p>4. There were 6 conferences and seminars organised and held at the AAI, dealing with (i) information and tracing matters such as international practice and forthcoming Irish legislation (ii) domestic adoption and issues such as fostering and the Children and Family Relations Bill/Act (iii) intercountry adoption issues such as country specific information, the Hague Convention, and older children with additional needs.</p>
<p>5. To support Government Departments in the development of adoption and adoption-related policy.</p>	<p>5. Timely feedback to requests for comments and views on legislative and other proposals.</p>

REVIEW OF THE AUTHORITY'S 2015 BUSINESS PLAN

Goal 1: To build capacity for excellence in adoption services both internally and externally.

Tasks	Actions	KPIs / Outputs
<p>Progress the establishment of the Authority as an independent body</p>	<p>(a) Establish financial independence (b) Establish separate legal function (c) Establish an independent HR function</p>	<p>Finance Unit established In-house solicitor recruited HR Unit established</p>
<p>Complete implementation of Risk Management in the Authority</p>	<p>Adopt a risk management policy, appoint a risk officer and review the risk registers</p>	<p>Risk Register reviewed at each Board meeting and at Risk & Audit Committee</p>
<p>Establish an internal audit function</p>	<p>Appoint internal auditor</p>	<p>Internal auditor appointed and three-year work plan agreed by RAC.</p>

Information systems & document management	Review all information systems and record management to identify requirements for a new best practice specification	On-going discussion with IT Division of Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Board IT Project	Review options for the provision of ipads , encrypted security, and IT support to Members	Proposal examined by DCYA IT Division.

Goal 2: To support, monitor, investigate and, where necessary, to secure quality standards in adoption services.

Tasks	Actions	KPIs Outputs
Standards for Accredited Bodies in ICA facilitation.	Further development of the Standards	Board subcommittee drafted initial standards, ongoing project for review in next Corporate Plan
Complete final phase of monitoring of Accredited Bodies	Steering group to be established. Programme of onsite visits to review practice and policies – pilot to commence. Full Implementation of inspection Regime	Steering group currently composed of AAI senior management team. Pilot inspection regime established and tested with Cúnamh. Two Accredited bodies identified for inspection in 2016.

Goal 3: To provide a comprehensive information, research and communications framework to support the development of adoption policy, service delivery and continuous quality improvement.

Tasks	Actions	KPIs / Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of Children’s Referendum 2012 • Child & Family Relationships Bill 	Disseminate to all stakeholders the implications of the proposed new legislative	A number of information conferences were hosted by the Adoption Authority of Ireland.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Recognition Bill • Information & Tracing Bill 	<p>initiatives to be enacted in 2015.</p>	
<p>Review implementation of Hague 2010-2015</p>	<p>Inform stakeholders of lesson learned and best practice moving forward in the adoption and operation of the Hague Convention.</p>	<p>Host an information conference for all Stakeholders entitled: Review of the implementation of Hague 2010-2015.</p>
<p>Clarity of communication with the public & stakeholders to include a corporate identity.</p>	<p>Evaluate current oral, written and electronic communication. Prepare a strategy to address deficiencies including engagement with NALA. Monitor inquiry subsequent to implementation.</p>	<p>A number of Authority's documents were considered and improved by NALA.</p>
<p>Establish FOI as a routine operation function of the Authority</p>	<p>FOI section to be established within Corporate Services & Accreditation Unit and FOI appeals officer to be appointed</p>	<p>All FOI requests were considered and answered within the statutory time limits.</p>
<p>Build capacity in Information & Tracing including raising awareness of National Adoption Contact Preference Register</p>	<p>Rationalisation and restructure of existing I & T services. Advertise the Authority as the national centre of excellence for I & T (await new legislation before agreeing action)</p>	<p>Draft plans not implemented until forthcoming legislation defines the national information and tracing services</p>

Goal 4: To undertake and promote objective decision-making in adoption services in accordance with national and international law and evidence-based best practice.

Tasks	Actions	KPIs / Outputs
Engaging with Hague Convention National Central Authorities in accordance with the Corporate Plan.	Identify candidate states for administrative arrangements (for example Cambodia, Brazil, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Haiti, Poland, and Lithuania)	On-going discussion with Kazakh and Haitian authorities.
Engaging with non-Hague Convention National Central Authorities in accordance with the Corporate Plan.	Any work that is required by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in Russia and / or Ethiopia the Authority will prioritise.	On-going consideration being given by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
Consolidate agreement with the USA	Visit the USA and liaise with all relevant stakeholders.	In September 2015 the Authority visited the USA, meeting with the Embassy, the State Department and various agencies to review adoption matters.

DOMESTIC ADOPTION

Activity Analysis

Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability

101 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted in 2015. The average time taken between application to the Authority for a Declaration of Eligibility and Suitability and granting of the Declaration was 5.8 weeks. In most cases Declarations were granted within 3-4 weeks of receipt of the application.

Standards and guidelines produced by the Authority for use by the various stakeholders are informed by the trends compiled from these reviews. They are also informed by best practice nationally and internationally; and by the Adoption Act

2010; statutory regulations' Hague Convention standards in adoption; and international research such as that of the International Social Services.

Adoption Orders

94 Adoption orders were granted in 2015. The majority, 66, were made in stepfamily adoptions. There was a decrease in the number of adoption orders made in respect of children who had been in long term foster care - 13 in 2015 from 23 in 2014. The balance (15) was made up of a combination of adoptions within the extended family (1), adoptions of infants placed for adoption in Ireland (7), and the formalisation of adoptions in respect of children who were placed in the care of Irish couples from the Philippines (6) and India (1).

Applications to the High Court

Under the Adoption Act 2010, the Authority is obliged to obtain a High Court order before certain adoptions can proceed.

The Authority must make an application to the High Court seeking to dispense with birthfather notification and consultation in the following instances –

- where the Authority does not know the identity of a birth father, or
- where the Authority has been unable to locate the birth father in order to notify and consult him in relation to the placement of his child for adoption, or to an application for the adoption of his child.

Other instances where the Authority must seek the approval of the High Court to make an adoption order include, where the child is a child of marriage or where there is an issue with regard to the placement of the child with the prospective adoptive parents.

In 2015, 6 applications were made to the High Court under Section 18 of the Act to allow a child to be placed for adoption without consultation with the birth father. The 6 applications were granted.

In 2015, 14 applications were made to the High Court under Section 30 of the Act to allow an adoption application to proceed without consultation with the birth father. The 14 applications were granted.

To allow the Authority to make an adoption order, the Child and Family Agency (or in certain instances, the applicants), must make an application to the High Court in the following instances –

- where parental consents are not forthcoming and/or
- where it can be demonstrated that the parent(s) have failed in their duty to their child, and
- adoption is deemed to be in the child's best interests,

In 2015, 13 applications were made to the High Court under Sections 53/54 of the Act. The 13 applications were granted in 2015.

INFORMATION and TRACING

Activity Analysis

Applications Release of Birth Certificates

In 2015, the Authority received 68 applications from adopted persons for the release of their birth certificate and these are being actively considered.

30 birth certificates were released and 5 applications were refused. Of the 30 birth certificates released some were in respect of applications made prior to 2015. 3 of the applications which were refused were in respect of applications received prior to 2015.

National Adoption Contact Preference Register (NACPR)

In 2015, 572 new applicants were added to the National Adoption Contact Preference Register. In 92 cases the Authority identified a match between the new applicants and family members who had joined the Register previously.

Social Work Team

The Authority's Social Work Team dealt with 212 new referrals for information, counselling and tracing services. With regard to the National Adoption Contact Preference Register, social workers contacted people in 92 matches, including 45 sibling matches. Through the social work day duty phone, a further 138 people sought information and advice on tracing in 2015.

CODE OF GOVERNANCE

The Adoption Authority of Ireland reviews its agreed Code of Governance. All draft changes are presented to the Board and the Department for approval.

Submission is made to the Department on draft updated Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

All staff and Board members are briefed on the Code of Governance.

All checklist and compliance tools have been completed and sent to the Department.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Activity Analysis

Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability

The Authority granted 86 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability in 2015 to applicants seeking to adopt abroad and extended 86 existing Declarations by one year.

Register of Intercountry Adoptions

A total of 160 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions in respect of all relevant sections of the Adoption Act 2010. Of these, 82 entries were in respect of adoptions into Ireland carried out under the terms and conditions the 1993 Hague Convention.

Matching of children

Social workers work with administrative staff and a medical advisor, to advise on the matching of children's needs with the abilities of prospective Irish parents. In 2015, 80 children were referred into Ireland from other countries. All referrals of children for adoption are reviewed by the Authority's multi-disciplinary team (which comprises of the Principal Social Worker, the medical advisor and the manager of the Intercountry Adoption Unit).

In countries where Ireland does not have an accredited agency in operation, e.g. the Philippines and Thailand, social work staff from the Authority contacted the prospective parents to discuss their ability to meet the specific children's needs.

Special Commission reviewed practical operation of the 1993 Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention

From 8 to 12 June 2015, a Special Commission meeting was held in The Hague to review the practical operation of the *Hague Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption* (the "1993 Hague Convention"). More than 255 experts, representing 74 countries and 18 international organisations, participated in the meeting.

The Authority was represented at the Conference by the Chairman, CEO and Director of Operations and Corporate Services.

On the first day, a discussion on the "20 years of the 1993 Hague Convention" was held. On subsequent days, a range of issues were discussed, including: the intercountry adoption of special needs children, post-adoption support, habitual residence and the scope of the 1993 Convention, co-operation, issues of procedure, the use of modern technologies in intercountry adoption, the financial aspects of intercountry adoption and how best to prevent and address illicit practices. The meeting provided a unique forum for the authorities of the various Contracting States, as well as States actively considering joining the Convention, to share concerns and experiences in relation to the interpretation and application of the Convention.

In terms of further work, the Special Commission recommended that, amongst other matters, work should continue to develop further the guidance on habitual residence and the scope of the 1993 Hague Convention. It also recommended that work continue to provide guidance on the recommended content of the Article 15 and 16 reports, the post-adoption report and the statement of consent of the child to the intercountry adoption, as well as other new model forms. The meeting also recommended that the "Experts' Group on the financial aspects of intercountry adoption" and the "Working Group on Preventing and Addressing Illicit Practices" should continue their work.

Country Specific Issues

Bulgaria: In 2015, 10 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in Bulgaria; 8 Agreements to Place were granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention) and 8 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.

China: In 2015, 14 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in China; 17 Agreements to Place were granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention) and 15 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.

Haiti: In 2015, 3 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in Haiti.

Mexico: In 2015, no Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in Mexico and 11 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions. Ten of these entries were in respect of adoptions effected in 2010-2011 and arose from a High Court judgement (*O’C v. the Adoption Authority of Ireland*).

Philippines: In 2015, 1 Declaration of Eligibility and Suitability was granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in the Philippines; 3 Agreements to Place were granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention). Under current arrangements, Filipino children may be subsequently adopted in Ireland.

Poland: In 2015, 2 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in Poland.

Thailand: In 2015, 6 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in Thailand; 4 Agreements to Place were granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention) and 1 entry was made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.

United States of America: In 2015, 23 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in the U.S.A.; 13 Agreements to Place were granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention) and 6 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.

Representatives of the Authority visited the USA to carry out the bi-annual review of the 2013 Ireland-USA administrative arrangement and met with agencies, the US State Department, the Irish Embassy in Washington and Irish Ambassador Anne Anderson.

Dr Geoffrey Shannon, Chairman, Patricia Carey, CEO and Kiernan Gildea, Director of Operations of the Adoption Authority of Ireland met with Ambassador Susan Jacobs, Special Advisor on Children’s issues, Henry Hand, Director of the Office for Children’s Issues and Carine Rosalia, Advisory Counsel.

The main purpose of the meeting was to review the operation of the Administrative Agreement on Intercountry Adoptions between Ireland and the US which was signed by Minister Fitzgerald (as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs) on a visit in September 2013. The review after two years was provided for in the agreement.

United Kingdom: In 2015, no Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in the U.K.; 1 Agreement to Place was granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention) and 5 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.

The National Central Authority (NCA) for England (the coordinating body for the four NCA's in the UK) has indicated that, generally speaking, children are not available for intercountry adoption from the UK. Exceptions may be made where a child is habitually resident in the UK but has relatives in Ireland.

Vietnam: In 2015, 27 Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability were granted to prospective adoptive parents proposing to adopt in Vietnam; 30 Agreements to Place were granted (Article 17 of the Hague Convention) and 31 entries were made in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions.

Colombia, Kenya, Lithuania, Peru, and South Africa: Helping Hands Adoption Mediation Agency is accredited to facilitate adoptions from these countries.

Kazakhstan: Efforts continued to instigate discussions on the possibility of entering into administrative arrangements with the authorities in Kazakhstan.

REGISTER OF GENDER RECOGNITION of INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS

Dr. James Reilly, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, signed Statutory Instrument *No. 534 of 2010 – Adoption Act 2010 (Register of Gender Recognition of Intercountry Adoptions) Regulations 2015* in December 2015.

Persons holding a valid Certificate of Gender Recognition issued by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and whose adoption is registered in the Register of Foreign Adoptions (RFA) or the Register of Intercountry Adoptions (RICA) may apply to the Authority for an entry in the Register of Gender Recognition of Intercountry Adoptions.

Applications should be made in writing to the Authority and should be accompanied by

- The original copy of the Gender Recognition Certificate as issued by the DSP.

- A copy of the notification letter from the DSP which accompanied the Gender Recognition Certificate.
- A copy of the entry in the RFA or the RICA (if available).

There were two (2) entries made in the Register in 2015.

ACCREDITATION

Activity Analysis

The maintenance of a 'Register of Accredited Bodies' by the Authority is provided for under Section 126 of the Adoption Act 2010.

At the end of 2015, the following was the status of the fourteen registered accredited bodies:

Functioning:

- International Adoption Association
Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17 Rathfarnham Road, Dublin 6W
- PACT
18D Nutgrove Office Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
- Cúnamh
CPRSI House, 30 South Anne Street, Dublin 2
- Barnardos Post Adoption Service
23/24 Buckingham Street, Dublin 1
- St. Mura's Adoption Society
Pastoral Centre, Monastery Avenue, Letterkenny, Co Donegal
- Clarecare
Harmony Row, Ennis, Co Clare
- Arabella Counselling, t/a Here2Help
18D Nutgrove Office Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
- Helping Hands Adoption Facilitation Agency t/a Helping Hands Adoption Mediation Agency
Forge Lodge, Forge Hill, Cork

Closed or not functioning:

- Arc Adoption Limited (closed, November 2015)
4th Floor, Harmony Court, Harmony Row, Dublin 2

- Families for Children Adoption Agency Limited (Not active)
Suite 206, The Capel Building, Mary's Abbey, Dublin 1
- Pathways to Adoption (Not active)
Suite 36, Beacon Court, Sandyford, Dublin 18
- Family Bridge Adoptions Limited (Not active)
5 Deerhaven Court, Clonee, Dublin 15

Not proposing to renew registration in 2016:

- St. Patrick's Guild
203 Merrion Road, Blackrock, Dublin 4
- St. Attracta's Adoption Society
Custom House, No. 2 The Quays, Sligo

Number of applications for registration of an accredited body – **NIL**.

Arc Adoption Limited

Arc Adoption decided on the 16 September 2015 not to seek a renewal of its accreditation under the Adoption Act 2010, when its accreditation expired on 7 February 2016.

This decision was taken for a number of reasons, all linked to lack of funding and the organisation's sustainability within the changing landscape of intercountry adoption.

Arc's Board decided that the company could not continue in such circumstances, and would therefore exit the adoption sector. The agency requested the Adoption Authority of Ireland to implement its contingency plan to enable an orderly transfer of all live cases and client files to the Authority.

The Authority took temporary custody of 120 files, pending negotiations with the Helping Handing Adoption Mediation Agency (HHAMA) to take over the U.S. adoption programme and the resulting workload. A successful hand-over was achieved with little or no interruption to the U.S. programme.

Inspection

In addition to the six-monthly self-assessment reports submitted by all accredited bodies during 2015, the Authority embarked on a pilot scheme of inspection with Cúnamh during June / July 2015.

Number of applications for registration of accredited bodies received in 2015	NIL
Name and address of the accredited bodies entered in the Register of Accredited Bodies in 2015	NONE
Name and address of each Accredited Body removed from the Register in 2015	NONE

OVERVIEW OF ENERGY USAGE IN 2015

In December 2009, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources gave effect to Directive 2006/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2006, and made the 'European Communities (Energy End-use Efficiency and Energy Services) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 542 of 2009)'.

The Regulations require public sector organisations to report annually from January 2011 on their energy usage and actions taken to reduce consumption.

In 2015, the Adoption Authority of Ireland used 168,129 kWh, which was 11.9% less than 2014. We are on target to reach the reduction required by 2020.

STATISTICAL TABLES

Table 1	Birth and Domestic Adoption Trends in Ireland 1953-2015
Table 2	Domestic Adoption Orders granted 2015 / Accredited Bodies concerned
Table 3	Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised between 1991 and 2015, where the adopters were habitually resident in Ireland and held a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability at the time of effecting the adoption. (Section 5, Adoption Act 1991 and Section 57(2)(b)(ii) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).
Table 4	Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised in 2015, where the adoptions were effected after the enactment of the Adoption Act 2010 and where the adopters were habitually resident in Ireland and held a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability at the time of effecting the adoption. (Section 57(2)(b)(ii) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).
Table 5	Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised in 2015, where the adoptions were effected prior to the enactment of the Adoption Act 2010 and where the adopters were habitually resident in Ireland and held a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability from the Adoption Authority of Ireland at the time of effecting the adoption). (Section 57(2)(a) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).
Table 6	Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised in 2015, where the adoptions were effected after the enactment of the Adoption Act 2010 and where the adopters were habitually resident abroad. (Section 57(2)(b)(i) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).
Table 7	Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised between 2011 and 2015, where the adopters were habitually resident in Ireland and held a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability at the time of effecting the adoption. (Section 5, Adoption Act 1991 and Section 57(2)(b)(ii) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).
Table 8	Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised between 1991 and 2015 (All Sections)
Table 9	Total number of Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability granted and refused by the (former) Adoption Board under the Adoption Act, 1991 for intercountry adoptions.
Table 10	Total number of Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability granted and refused by the Adoption Authority of Ireland under the Adoption Act, 2010 for intercountry adoptions.

Table 1. Birth and Domestic Adoption Trends in Ireland 1953-2015

Year	Total Births	Non-Marital Births	% of Total Births	No. of Adoptions
1953	62,558	1,340	2.14	381
1954	62,534	1,310	2.09	888
1955	61,662	1,234	2.00	786
1956	60,740	1,173	1.93	565
1957	61,242	1,032	1.69	752
1958	59,510	976	1.64	592
1959	60,188	959	1.59	501
1960	60,735	968	1.59	505
1961	59,825	975	1.63	547
1962	61,782	1,111	1.80	699
1963	63,246	1,157	1.83	840
1964	64,072	1,292	2.02	1,003
1965	63,525	1,403	2.21	1,049
1966	62,215	1,436	2.31	1,178
1967	61,307	1,540	2.51	1,493
1968	61,004	1,558	2.55	1,343
1969	62,912	1,642	2.61	1,225
1970	64,382	1,709	2.65	1,414
1971	67,551	1,842	2.73	1,305
1972	68,527	2,005	2.93	1,291
1973	68,713	2,167	3.15	1,402
1974	68,907	2,309	3.35	1,415
1975	67,178	2,515	3.74	1,443
1976	67,718	2,545	3.76	1,104
1977	68,892	2,877	4.18	1,127
1978	70,299	3,003	4.27	1,223
1979	72,539	3,337	4.60	988
1980	74,064	3,723	5.03	1,115
1981	72,158	3,914	5.42	1,191
1982	70,843	4,358	6.15	1,191
1983	67,117	4,552	6.78	1,184
1984	64,062	5,116	7.99	1,195
1985	62,388	5,282	8.47	882
1986	61,620	5,946	9.65	800
1987	58,433	6,347	10.86	715
1988	54,600	6,483	11.87	649
1989	52,018	6,671	12.82	615
1990	53,044	7,767	14.64	648
1991	52,718	8,912	16.91	590
1992	51,089	9,211	18.03	523
1993	49,304	9,826	19.93	500
1994	47,928	9,904	20.66	424
1995	48,530	10,788	22.23	490
1996	50,390	12,484	24.77	405
1997	52,311	13,892	26.56	422
1998	53,551	15,133	28.26	400
1999	53,354	16,461	30.85	317
2000	54,239	17,235	31.78	303
2001	57,882	18,049	31.18	293
2002	60,521	18,815	31.09	266
2003	61,517	19,313	31.39	263
2004	61,684	19,935	32.32	273
2005	61,042	19,528	32.00	253
2006	64,237	21,295	33.15	222

Year	Total Births	Non-Marital Births	% of Total Births	No. of Adoptions
2007	70,620	23,170	32.81	187
2008	75,065	24,844	33.09	200
2009	74,728	24,532	32.82	190
2010	73,724	24,860	33.72	189
2011	74,650	25,157	33.70	39
2012	72,225	25,344	35.10	49
2013	68,930	24,393	35.40	116
2014	67,462	24,514	36.30	112
2015	Not available at	time of printing		94
TOTAL				44,364

Sources: Statistical Abstracts , (various years) C.S.O.

Table 2. Domestic Adoption Order granted / Accredited Bodies concerned

Health Service Executive / Child & Family Agency / Tusla	All
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Table 3.
 Entries in the Register of Foreign Adoptions, 1991-2010, entered pursuant to Section 5 of the Adoption Act 1991 and in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions, 2010-2015 pursuant to Section 57(2)(b)(ii) of the Adoption Act 2010. (Applicants habitually resident in Ireland holding a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability at the time of effecting the intercountry adoption)

No	Country	No of Children	
1	Russia	1605	
2	Vietnam	817	
3	Romania	786	
4	China	404	
5	Ethiopia	301	
6	Guatemala	176	
7	Kazakhstan	149	
8	Belarus	145	
9	Thailand	113	
10	Ukraine	99	
11	Mexico	107	
12	United States of America	73	
13	India	51	
14	Colombia	19	
15	Taiwan	19	
16	Brazil	17	
17	Paraguay	16	
18	Philippines	11	
19	Bulgaria	18	
20	Peru	7	
21	Cambodia	4	
22	Uganda	2	
23	Uzbekistan	2	
24	United Kingdom	7	
25	El Salvador	2	
26	Chile	1	

27	Israel	1	
28	Japan	1	
29	Lebanon	1	
30	Bolivia	1	
31	Sri Lanka	1	
32	Venezuela	1	
33	Zambia	1	
34	Kenya	1	
35	Zimbabwe	1	
36	Morocco	1	
37	Bosnia Herzegovina	1	
38	Malawi	1	
39	Libya	1	
40	South Africa	1	
41	Lithuania	1	
	Total	4966	

Table 4 Entries in the Register of Intercountry Adoptions, pursuant to Section 57(2)(b)(ii) of the Adoption Act 2010, for 2015 only. (Applicants habitually resident in Ireland holding a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability at the time of effecting the intercountry adoption)	
Country	2015
Bulgaria	8
Cambodia	1
China	15
Lithuania	1
Mexico	11
Peru	1
Russia	2
Thailand	1
United States of America	6
United Kingdom	5
Vietnam	31
Total	82

Table 5	
Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised in 2015, where the adoptions were effected any time prior to the enactment of the Adoption Act 2010 and where the adopters were habitually resident abroad. (Section 57(2)(a) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).	
Country	2015
Australia	2
Canada	2
China	12
Colombia	2
Italy	1
Kazakhstan	1
Russia	1
South Africa	2
Tanzania	2
United Kingdom	11
United States of America	9
Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia)	3
Total	48

Table 6 Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised in 2015, where the adoptions were effected after the enactment of the Adoption Act 2010 and where the adopters were habitually resident abroad. (Section 57(2)(b)(i) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).	
Cambodia	1
China	2
Colombia	2
Hong Kong	3
India	1
Philippines	1
Tanzania	1
Thailand	2
United Kingdom	9
United States of America	7
South Africa	1
Total	30

Table 7

Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised between 2011 and 2015, where the adopters were habitually resident in Ireland and held a valid Declaration of Eligibility & Suitability at the time of effecting the adoption). (Section 5, Adoption Act 1991 and Section 57(2)(b)(ii) of the Adoption Act 2010 refers).

Country	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bulgaria	0	0	1	4	8
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	1
China	6	1	3	1	15
Colombia	0	0	1	0	0
El Salvador	0	0	1	0	0
Ethiopia	42	32	26	0	0
India	0	10	10	3	0
Kazakhstan	4	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	1
Mexico	3	1	0	5	11
Peru	0	0	0	0	1
Philippines	1	0	0	0	0
Russia	124	49	17	4	2
Taiwan	1	3	1	0	0
Thailand	0	2	5	6	1
United States of America	7	19	7	5	6
United Kingdom	0	0	0	2	5
Vietnam	0	0	0	4	31
Total	188	117	72	34	82

Table 8 Total number of intercountry adoptions recognised between 1991 and 2015 (All Sections)	
1991	58
1992	305
1993	59
1994	67
1995	90
1996	117
1997	148
1998	260
1999	284
2000	323
2001	285
2002	440
2003	487
2004	486
2005	439
2006	406
2007	436
2008	490
2009	394
2010	288
2011	342
2012	244
2013	145
2014	104
2015	160
Total	6857

Table 9 Number of Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability granted and refused by the Adoption Board under the Adoption Act, 1991 in respect of intercountry adoptions.		
Year	Number of Declarations Granted	Number of Declarations Refused
1991	4	1
1992	40	1
1993	54	6
1994	63	3
1995	109	4
1996	117	5
1997	176	1
1998	206	3
1999	242	1
2000	282	1
2001	391	1
2002	399	1
2003	468	0
2004	461	0
2005	403	3
2006	400	3
2007	452	5
2008	494	1
2009	391	1
2010	423	1
Total	5,575	40

Table 10 Number of Declarations of Eligibility and Suitability (Intercountry) granted and refused by the Adoption Authority of Ireland from 2010-2015 under the Adoption Act 2010 in respect of intercountry adoptions.		
Year	Granted	Refused
2010	20	0
2011	205	0
2012	164	2
2013	266	1
2014	106	4
2015	86	1
Total	847	8