

Transcript

Saturday, 17th April 2021

Catherine Day - Good morning everybody and welcome to the Citizens' Assembly weekend on Gender Equality and I want to start by thanking you all for getting up earlier and giving us extra time for this weekend.

I think we will need that extra time because we have a big weekend ahead of us, with a lot of work to do. I think we all feel that this is a serious and exciting moment in our work, because agreeing on the ballot papers and then voting on them, is the culmination of all the work we've done together since January 2020. It now feels like quite a long time ago, it is very important not to rush the end of this work and it's important to get the recommendations right but it's equally important to recognise that now it's time to decide and from here on in it's actually all up to you. You've received the program for today and tomorrow and when we surveyed you a small majority favoured finishing our work tomorrow rather than holding another meeting after this weekend. So we've constructed the program on that basis, let's see how we get on.

We have organized the program to ensure that you have every opportunity to discuss each of the recommendations both in the breakout groups and in plenary, if necessary.

We have grouped the recommendations into blocs and we plan to have you vote today on each bloc that has been discussed and agreed today. We plan to follow the same approach tomorrow, we will see at the end of today how that has worked for us.

Now this will be the first time that you'll be voting and there will be several votes throughout the day, so please keep your email open all the time, in the background, using the personal voting code that each of you has received. We will allow sufficient time for voting so that nobody needs to feel under pressure.

The Secretariat is, as always, available to help anyone who has any technical issues, but given the way that you've all become so expert on Zoom, I don't really expect that there will be many difficulties and that you will handle the voting with your usual ease.

The work that we'll be doing in these two days is different from what we have done before and I think we will inevitably have to be a bit flexible about the timing, some of the discussions may take longer than we have anticipated and some may go faster than we might have guessed. So we will follow the program but we are going to ask you for your flexibility in advance. The Secretariat and I need your understanding that if we need to take a few minutes every now and again to check wording or to make sure that the correct wording has been transferred into the voting system, we hope that you will be patient with us because it's important that we get this right.

In finalizing the arrangements for today we have already identified a couple of points where we may need to take a bit of extra time, for example: where we need to count and verify votes we will highlight these points as they arise but I'm asking for your patience in advance.

I'm also asking that you stay at your screen and bear with us please, don't disappear off because none of us know how fast or how slow the pace will be in these two days.

Please stay at the screen as much as possible and we promise to be as quick as we can, when we need to take an extra few minutes.

Now you've already commented through, Survey Monkey, on the first version of the recommendations and this time, we have also given you an explanation of the meaning of most of the recommendations by adding what we call: explainers to the text. I hope that this has been helpful for you but if you have any further questions, these can be emailed to us during the breakout group sessions.

We are at decision time now, you have seen from the programme that we have made a number of suggestions for working a bit differently in the breakout groups and these are to ensure first of all that we respond to the views of the majority but also to keep things moving throughout today and tomorrow. If you feel strongly that the wording of a particular recommendation should be changed then we'd ask that the following be followed. First of all we are asking you to focus on substantive changes rather than proposing just different wording that says more or less the same thing or that adds detail without changing the meaning of the recommendation. I just want to remind you that we have agreed together to keep the recommendations short and clear so that the real priorities come through loud and clear. Proposals for changes to the wording should be emailed out of the breakout groups by the Roomaxx recorder as soon as they are agreed and this will give us a few minutes to think about how to take them on board.

We also ask that you ensure, at least half of the breakout group supports any alternative wording, so this means if you're in a group of nine or ten that five people have to agree that the wording needs to be changed or six people if you're in a bigger group. We're also ask you to please not type comments or suggestions on the wording in the chat and don't email wording to us we will only consider wording changes sent through the Roomaxx facilitator in each breakout group. This is the only way that we can be clear that the proposal to change wording of a recommendation coming from any group actually does have a majority support in the group.

Please also remember that what you are deciding right now is what questions should be on the ballot paper so in other words, you're deciding whether the Assembly should have a chance to vote on the issue. If you feel strongly that the recommendation should not go forward, you can always choose to vote no when it comes to the formal voting later on in the day.

Since we have a lot of work to do today, I'm not going to go through the outline for the whole weekend. I will come back at each step and let you know what's happening next.

You will be moving between the breakout groups and the plenary throughout the day and I'll try to keep you up to date on what you should be doing at each stage.

So we are now going to move you into the first breakout group of the day where you are going to discuss recommendations in Bloc C that's on Gender Equality Principles, you will come back to the plenary at 9:30am and at that stage the facilitators will report very briefly on your discussions and we'll try to answer any questions you have and hear if a majority in any group wants to suggest a change in wording.

So we are going to send you straight off now to the breakout groups to start the work and to get the most out of the fact that you have very generously given an extra hour of your time today.

So we'll see you back at 9:30am.

Have a good discussion.

Catherine Day - Welcome back everybody I think we're off to a very good start.

I know some of the groups were able to agree very quickly on their position but we need to wait for each group to have enough time. We are still keeping very much to time.

What I'm going to do and this is what I will do each time you come back from the breakout group is just check with the facilitators for each group, where we stand. I think in this case all the groups are happy to agree the recommendations and just one group has a small change to propose but I'm going to just ask each facilitator to tell me quickly, does the group agree with the wording as it stands or is there a change to be proposed or are there any questions?

Catherine Day - So can we hear from the facilitator for group 1 please?

Facilitator 1 - Thank you Chair - the citizens in Group 1 agreed unanimously that the wording should be put forward on the ballot paper.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 2 please?

Facilitator 2 - Thank you Chair. Like the Citizens in Group 1, the citizens in Group 2 unanimously agreed with the wording set out be put forward on the ballot paper.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 3?

Facilitator 3 - Yes, similarly all the citizens in Group 3 were happy with the proposal for Bloc C, they also wanted to convey their appreciation for the hard work of the Secretariat which was evident in the documents distributed to them.

Catherine Day - That's very kind and I certainly echo that thank you group four please?

Facilitator 4 - Full agreement from the citizens of Group 4 thank you Chair

Catherine Day - Thank you Group 5 please - Hello Group 5, oh dear?

Facilitator 5 - Apologies sorry about that, the citizens in Group 5 have one suggested change and that is in point 16 and it is to add the word Cabinet before Minister, other than that the citizens are happy with the wording.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 6?

Facilitator 6 - Good morning Chair, the citizens in Group 6 were in 100% agreement as well. Thank you.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 7

Facilitator 7 - The citizens were in full agreement as well with the wording, Thank you.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 8 please?

Facilitator 8 - Thank you Chair the citizens in Group 8 were also in unanimous agreement with wording.

Catherine Day - That's great thank you and Group 9?

Facilitator 9 - Good morning Chair the citizens in Group 9 are also in unanimous agreements with the content and questions, they did just want to add as well, the one comment that came out, they found the explainers particularly useful in aiding their understanding, so thank you for that.

Catherine Day - Thank you, well that I will pass on the thanks to those who did the work to provide them, ok, so what you will have understood from the program we are not going to immediately decide now on changes, we will group the morning's changes together and then come back and poll you on suggested changes.

So we're going to put you straight back into the breakout groups again, this time to discuss bloc D which are the recommendations on Leadership in the Workplace. Together with those in Education and Norms. It's now 9:32am, so we'll bring you back at 9:52am.

Ok so you have 20 minutes.

Ok so we will see you again in 20 minutes time - keep up the good work.

Thanks a lot.

Catherine Day - Everybody welcome back.

I'm going to, as I said before, ask each facilitator in turn to report and basically to answer two questions. 1) Does your Group want to propose any revised wording 2) Does your Group need more time because this was quite a large Bloc of questions?

So can we hear from Group 1 please?

Facilitator 1 - Thank you Chair the citizens in Group 1 have proposed two changes to wording. The first relates to 20B and language has been proposed, as that was seen as inherently discriminatory, so some language has been proposed and sent on to the Expert Advisory Group and that was supported by a majority in the room. There was also a question in relation to 25A and it was felt that language should be added to make that recommendation more forceful that was supported unanimously within the Group.

Catherine Day - Ok, thank you, we will see the wording as soon as you can send it to us, Group 2 please?

Facilitator 2 - In terms of Group 2, there was unanimous agreements on questions 20, 23, 24 and 25 and there was majority agreement on questions 21, 22 and 26. In summary the paper as is presented thank you.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much Group 3 please?

Facilitator 3 - Yes there was broadly consensus on bloc D - however they were, the citizens were just about to vote on a proposed amendment to 25C but we just didn't get time to, so I'm not sure whether we had the majority on that.

Catherine Day - Ok we will just hear from everybody first and then we'll see what we do, Group 4 please

Facilitator 4 - Thank you Chair, so a slight amendment to 20B and this is from a majority of the citizens in Group 4 and the change suggested would be to remove the wording such as gender balanced for short lists for interview.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 5 please?

Facilitator 5 - The citizens in Group 5 agreed unanimously with the wording as proposed

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 6 please?

Facilitator 6 - Good morning Chair, the citizens in Group 6 agreed unanimously as well and to agree to go with the wording thank you.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 7 please?

Facilitator 7 - The citizens of Group 7 agree unanimously, they had one question which was answered by the Expert Advisory Group.

Catherine Day - Thank you Group 8 please

Facilitator 8 - Thank you Chair, the citizens in Group 8 had some issues around question 20, however they didn't reach a majority to propose any change, this is on question 20 A/B/C and specifically both the questions in relation to section B. Also there was a proposed change to question 24 but we didn't quite get time enough to go around the full group.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 9

Facilitator 9 - Thank you Chair, the citizens of Group 9 were in unanimous agreement and happy with all of the content in bloc D

Catherine Day - Ok, thank you well since we are slightly ahead of where we had thought we might be, I am going to propose that we can put you back into the breakout groups especially for the two Groups who didn't have enough time and we will bring you back at 10:05am. So that gives you 8 minutes just for those of you who need the extra time and if you don't need the extra time just have a chat among yourselves or whatever. We will bring you back at 10:05am. Ok thanks very much, see you shortly.

Catherine Day - Here we are again, as you can see today we will be going backwards and forwards much more rapidly than previously. Can I just ask the people sending us the wording changes or the questions, please just make sure that you have correctly identified which recommendation that your changes are referring to. Just double check that before you send them to us please otherwise it causes a bit of confusion.

So can I now come back to the groups who needed more time who were not finished? So I think that was Group 3, you were the first one to say you needed more time, so can we hear from you please?

Facilitator 3 – Yes, thank you Chair, a majority of the citizens in Group 3 want to amend 25C to make it stronger, the amendment would essentially add C to A, such that C would no longer exist. So it would read as follows: A) Be more strongly regulated to promote Gender Equality and avoid gender discrimination and stereotyping; such as make special efforts to improve the visibility of Men, performing caring roles.

Catherine Day - Did we get an email from the Group on that, with that wording, if we didn't maybe you could send it to us now.

Facilitator 3 - I'll check with the questions recorder on that?

Catherine Day - Ok thanks very much and I think there was at least one other group who needed more time, just so we don't have to go through each group?

Facilitator 8 - Yes thank you Chair, the citizens in Group 8 have agreed by majority that the wording for each of the questions is sufficient as it stands

Catherine Day - Ok thank you very much, was there any other group that had something else to say?

Facilitator 4 - Sorry Chair Group 4

Catherine Day - Please yeah thank you

Facilitator 4 - So to 25B, the majority of the citizens in Group 4 are looking for the word regularly to be replaced with the word, quarterly.

Catherine Day – Ok, thank you very much we will take all that on board and we will come back to you later in the morning, where we want to propose some changes to the wording and we will zoom poll you then.

So to keep up the rhythm of work and I’m sorry I sounded like a bit of a slave driver but it will be to everybody's advantage in the end, we're going to put you back into your breakout groups now and this time you're going to be discussing bloc E which is the recommendations on Gender Quotas, Politics and Public Life and we have allocated a half an hour for this so that means we would bring you back at 10:40am. So have a good discussion and we'll see you again in half an hour thanks very much.

Catherine Day – Welcome back everybody, now keeping with the previous pattern, I am going to call on each facilitator to report very briefly on the work in each breakout group. We have had some proposals for amendments we have tried to answer some questions, so can I hear from Group 1 please?

Facilitator 1 - Thank you Chair, the citizens in Group 1 agreed by a majority to propose an amendment to 29C - to replace ‘regular’ with ‘annual’ and that was sent to the Expert Advisory Group. The proposal to put the language/ proposals on the ballot paper, there was majority agreed that, there was a lively debate on the matter and while agreeing to put forward the language proposed, there were concerns about using quotas as a tool, but the majority agreed to go ahead.

Catherine Day - Ok well just because this, provokes a general remark, I think that's important that your group has respected the difference between what they think and what should go on the ballot paper and it's up to everybody to vote yes or no when we actually get to the voting but the important thing also is to decide what the Assembly will be allowed to vote on, so thank you for that Group 2 please.

Facilitator 2 - Thank you very much Chair, the citizens in Group 2 were in unanimous agreement in terms of the wording for question 27 and question 30 and in relation to question 31 we ran out of time in terms of discussion and they seek more time. In relation to questions 28 and 29 they have made the following suggestions in relation to question 28; it's specifically in relation to 28B and the suggested wording agreed by the citizens from table 2 is that it would read ‘enacting gender quota legislation that requires private companies to have at least 40% gender balance according to specific criteria such as size, turnover, number of employees etc.’, that was decided on following clarification that was received back from the Expert panel. In relation to 29A the change that has been suggested there is the addition of or Men so 29a would read ‘a quota of 30% representation of Women or Men on their Governing Bodies by 2025 and in relation to question 31 the Group ran out of time on discussion concerning 31A.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 3 please

Facilitator 3 - Yes the citizens in Group 3 are happy with bloc E - A majority propose one amendment to 29A which is insert at the end and 40% by 2030.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 4

Facilitator 4 - Thank you Chair, two proposed changes from the majority of the citizens in Group 4. Changes to 29A - to change the word 'quota' to 'target' and then for 29C to change the word 'regular' to 'annual'.

Catherine Day - Thank you Group 5 please.

Facilitator 5 – Group 5 had just 1 proposed amendment and that's to 29A and that's to change it to the quota of 30% representation of Women and 30% representation of Men on their Governing bodies by 2025 otherwise agree with the wording.

Catherine Day - Thank you Group 6

Facilitator 6 - Thank you chair, the group are in a majority of the wording on the vote ballot paper there was a vote taken and they want 27 to be taken off the ballot paper and we have emailed that back, they also wanted to just say to yourselves that the explainer notes at the end of them were excellent and it really did help them in their decision making and they just wanted you to note that so thank you.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, that's very good to hear, Group 7 please.

Facilitator 7 - Good afternoon, Group 7 had unanimous agreement on all of the questions apart from 31A which, more than 50% wanted the question reworded or removed and we did run out of time just at the very end on discussion on that so I don't have consensus on that question everything else has been submitted through the EQR.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 8

Facilitator 8 - Thank you Chair, Group 8 agreed that the wording, has been adopted and is sufficient for all of the questions and in the case of question 28 and question 29 and they were approved by a majority only.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much and Group 9 please.

Facilitator 9 – Thank you Chair, Group 9 are happy to proceed with everything as is, in bloc E there was a little conversation and they did send a question by EQR for some clarity around 29 in relation to public funding that was it specifically around national growing bodies, would it be suggested that smaller local organizations say a tidy towns or something in a Community would have to have the same kind of gender quotas on their committees in order to allow them to apply for funding and some felt that that this would not be necessarily fair. I mean that there are certain types of associations that might have more of a lean toward a male orientation and that through no fault of their own they wouldn't be able to achieve these kind of quota and therefore would be disadvantaged unfairly. So it's just a conversation more than anything else.

Catherine Day – Ok, so at this point in the morning we had scheduled a comfort break and we are going to give it to you now. I think you have done incredibly terrific work so far this morning, so I think everybody would need a break for a cup of tea or whatever but there were two groups who said they wanted more time so for those two groups, if you could take maximum 10 minutes and please come

back to us at 11.02am with whatever changes you wanted to propose and then give your Groups the comfort break. That's fine so for everybody please be back at 11:30am. That gives us time to now consider all the amendments that have come in and we will at 11:30am make proposals back to you on how we propose to deal with the suggestions for amendments. So all the groups who have already reported and are happy that they have reached the conclusion of their discussions you just take your comfort break now the two groups who said they needed more time you have 10 minutes to send your amendments back to us and then take your comfort break and we will see everybody back at 11:30am please.

Catherine Day - Welcome back everyone and thanks for your patience, we have quite a few more amendments proposed to this bloc of recommendations. So what I'm going to do now is go through each recommendation tell you what we propose to accept, which is the big majority of what you have proposed. Explain the 1 or 2 where we are not proposing to take amendments on board then we will put you back in the breakout groups for another 10 minutes, just to make sure that you understand what is proposed and to decide what you think about it.

Then we will bring you back and we will do a zoom poll on whether you want to go ahead with the original language or whether you want to go ahead with the proposed amended language so I hope that's clear and in each breakout group when you go back into it you will have the text of the amendments that your facilitator will be able to put up on the screen.

So let's make a start, Lena if you could share the slides please. So the very first proposal for an amendment is in recommendation 16 and the proposal is to add the word 'Cabinet Minister' as you know in our Constitution, Governments can only have 15 Cabinet Ministers so to put in the word Cabinet would mean strengthening the recommendation further, that is one that we would propose to accept and to zoom poll you on in a few minutes time.

The next one to which there were proposals made for change is Number 20 and here it was proposed by one group to delete the example so we don't give the examples such as gender balance shortlists, another group wanted to change the wording but that would not be necessary if we propose to delete the example. So again here we would propose to zoom poll you on whether you prefer the original wording or whether you would like to delete the example and have the amended wording.

Next one then is Number 25, here we had several proposals first of all you can see in 25A, we are proposing to add in and take action where discriminatory behaviours occur this would be a strengthening of the recommendation. In recommendation 25B the use of the word regularly in a number of places appears to have caused confusion and people want to clarify, so we are proposing to put in the word 'annually' so every year the organizations would have to publish details. There was a proposal to take away 25C and to move it into A and B but we are not proposing to poll you on that amendment because we are talking about different categories here. In 25A we are talking about regulation and in 25C we are talking about making efforts, it would be impossible, I think to regulate for improving the visibility of men performing caring roles. We want to encourage but it's difficult to actually legislate or regulate that.

Then we come to Number 28, here this is more of a specification and in the original recommendation it was proposing to leave it up to the Oireachtas to decide the criteria that should apply, to what kind of private companies should be involved but here we propose to be more specific as you suggest and to say that the requirement should apply to private companies according to a set of criteria which

would be the normal ones that usually apply in these circumstances, such as turnover, number of employees etc.

Then, Lena can you just show Recommendation 27, I just want to explain why we're not going to propose it, oh it's not available yet, ok we will come back to that at the end.

Sorry so then Number 29 please, here we had a number of proposals for changes as well, in 29A, the proposal, to be clear, we are talking about having an equal representation of women and men of 30% by 2025 and that this should rise to 40% by 2030. Again here in 29C to remove the word regular and replace it by annual reporting.

Then we come to, we have another change on Number 30, this is to clarify, what do we mean by this is people who are publicly elected representatives and so we feel it would be better since we are talking about public representatives elected to public office, we are going to propose now delete the reference to the Oireachtas, so that it would apply to all elections such as European elections, the Seanad and Elections to Local Government. We feel that this wording makes that clear, so that would be the proposed alternative wording for you to consider.

Then number 31 is an elaboration of the previous wording and it also includes 'holding the Social Media companies responsible for taking action, not only when they identify these objectionable behaviours but also where they have been informed or informed about them'. So that would be an alternative wording there.

Now I just wanted to put up 27B for a moment please. Ok this is something that has caused discussion previously and Group 6 wanted to delete this all together, now you will remember that first of all the legislation here at the moment, the current law in Ireland, is that parties that do not meet the statutory gender quota lose 50% of their public funding . Earlier on we proposed to you to increase that penalty to 100% and there were quite a number of comments against that, so we simply said increase the penalties for not meeting statutory quotas and we are not proposing to delete 27B altogether because we feel that that would go very much against the spirit of the majority view.

So we will not poll you on that if those people in Group 6, who wanted to delete this and you don't feel it should be on the ballot paper and you want to object to it then you can vote no when we come to that question in the voting.

So with that, oh yes, there was one other question about what is a public body just to let you know that public bodies are defined in legislation so there is a finite group of public bodies receiving public funding it doesn't cover every single body that receives very minor public funding or very small bodies but there is defined in legislation. So there is already an existing definition of what is a public body so with that we're going to put you back into the breakout groups for 10 minutes just to discuss the proposed amendments and then when we bring you back I will explain the next steps. So we'll see you again in 10 minutes so at 11:55am.

Catherine Day - Welcome back again, now we have had one additional suggestion to make, a small amendment in Recommendation 31. If Lena can just put it up on the screen now please. It's one that we would propose to accept to poll you on. So it's in the heading you see in the bold print at the top, strength in legislation it's to add in the word reporting to the text that's already there. So what we are going to do now is we are going to do a zoom poll, we are going to ask you each time, do you want the original wording or the revised wording to go on the ballot paper. Excuse me just a moment.

So we are going to ask you to either indicate that you want to stick to the original wording or that you want the amended wording. I'm going to ask the facilitators from each group now if the group is ready to go to the zoom poll, so can I hear from Group 1 please, is your group ready to go to the zoom poll?

Facilitator 1 - Thank you Chair, Room 1, the citizens are in unanimous support that alteration to the wording, dividing reporting with the intention that it will be a requirement on the companies to report to the relevant authorities in such situations, everything else is supported.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much, Group 2.

Facilitator 2 - The citizens in Group 2 – we were in agreement, they did have two questions, 1) was in Cabinet, does that preclude Junior Ministers and the understanding is that it does and 2) In relation to size and the understanding is that was included within the WT's and the turnover that was mentioned.

Catherine Day – Exactly, that is a definition of size, yes, so we didn't feel it was necessary to repeat the word size, Group 3.

Facilitator 3 - The citizens in Group 3 are ready to proceed to polling.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 4

Facilitator 4 – The citizens in Room 4 are generally in agreement to go to voting, there was just one suggested change to Question 16, to include the word existing before Cabinet and that was a majority from the room.

Catherine Day - Well I don't think that would be relevant to the Oireachtas / Government when deciding because they will either decide to have a Cabinet Minister or not, so I don't think we need to add that refinement in, Group 5 please.

Facilitator 5 - The citizens in Group 5 are ready to go to polling.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 6

Facilitator 6 - Yes the citizens in the Group 6 are ready to go to polling.

Catherine Day - Thank you, Group 7

Facilitator 7 - Group 7 are ready to go to polling

Catherine Day - And Group 8

Facilitator 8 – The citizens in Group 8 are ready to go to polling, although we did email in 2 Questions. 1) Was in relation to the Cabinet Minister and what effect that that actually has.

Catherine Day - Well it means that first of all the Cabinet Minister would be one of the 15 at the table with full voting rights etc. as defined in the Constitution. It would not be the same as a Junior Minister it would exclude a Junior Minister but if you add the word existing it would mean not to create a new portfolio, it would be to include the Gender Equality portfolio to an existing Minister and I think that that's a step too far in terms of us trying to dictate to a future Government how to do it. If the citizens want to say that the recommendation is to have a Cabinet Minister, then it would be up to the Government of the day, to decide whether that's a new portfolio or attached to an existing portfolio.

Facilitator 8 – Thank you Chair, 2) was whether or not this role is already created and is already existing in the form of the Minister for Justice and Equality.

Catherine Day - It's no longer the Minister for Justice and Equality, the Equality portfolio has now moved to a Department with a much longer name, which I will certainly get wrong if I try to quote it but it is under the portfolio of Minister Roderic O'Gorman and it has to do with Children, Youth and Equality so it's no longer in Justice, it's in another Department with a different Minister.

Facilitator 8 – I think that the substance of the question though chair, is that position already encompassed or is there a need for the question at all?

Catherine Day - Well I think, it's a recommendation into the future, you know, there is currently a portfolio with responsibilities of Equality with a Cabinet Minister but that might not always be the case in the future. So if the Government was to take up this recommendation it would apply presumably to the next Government.

Facilitator 8 – Thank you and there was one procedural point Chair and that is when the voting is done, that the proposals should be on the screen and visible so that they know what they're voting on.

Catherine Day - It will be when we are voting as opposed to polling each individual will be clicking with the text in front of them because each time they will be asked to vote whether they agree or they don't agree, so they will see it on the screen when they go into the voting application.

Facilitator 8 – I think the question might have been in relation to polling Chair

Catherine Day - The polling, yes they will see on the screen exactly the wording, of course, it will be like the last time that you participated in zoom polls, you see each time, first, so we will be doing it twice, one will be do you go for the original wording or the new wording and if you vote for the new wording then you will see the new wording on the screen and you'll be asked to say yes or no that this is the question that should be on the ballot paper, just to be really clear about it.

Facilitator 8 – Thank you Chair, there's nothing else from Group 8.

Catherine Day - Thank you very much and Group 9

Facilitator 9 – Thank you Chair, the members on Group 9 are happy to proceed to polling.

Catherine Day – Ok, that's great, so we will now do that, we will take the polls and remember that some of you weren't too happy that it took us a long time to do the zoom polling last time round, so we surveyed you and you have agreed that as soon as 80 people vote we would close the polls unless waiting for anybody who is still not clicked would make a difference. So normally speaking, if there's already a clear majority at 80 and it wouldn't be affected by waiting any longer we will close the polls when we get to 80. So just give it a moment or two to get the technical side right and here we come with the first slide.

Ok so this is the proposal you can see what it is – it is very straightforward it's to add the word 'Cabinet' to the text ahead of Minister and we're now going to poll you on whether you prefer the original wording or whether you are happy that the revised wording would go on the ballot paper so can you poll now be sure that you're clicking in the right box and when you're happy that the system has registered your preference then click submit please.

Ok we are up to 80 now so we will close the voting if it doesn't make a difference for any late comers. Thank you, ok so we had 20 votes in favour of the original language and 66 in favour of the revised language so when we come back to you we will be putting the revised language to you as to whether

you want it on the ballot paper or not, ok, good, then we come to the next one. I mean that's good in the sense that it's clear.

So recommendation Number 20, here the original language has the example in, the revised wording would delete example, as you can see here so we will now ask you to give your views on which you prefer the original or the revised language wording and again when you're ready please click submit.

Ok as you can see here, its 20% to 80%, so it's very clear you will be getting the revised wording in the next zoom poll, then we go to the next one.

Ok so here you can see one addition to the end of 25A and then one change in B to replace regularly with 'annually'. So again we will poll you on which wording you prefer the original or the revised, so here you must answer two questions because we have part A and B and again just click submit when you're ready. Ok, so that poll is now finished and you can see a clear majority for the revised wording. So that's what you will be getting in a few minutes, very good, we will move on to the next one, it's great that you see the results immediately it's one of the advantages of being online I think.

Ok, so here we have defined the question a little bit more, so precisely what we mean by over a specific size, can you please indicate now which you prefer the original or the revised wording and don't forget to click submit.

Ok, here we have the result again, the revised wording wins by a big margin, great next one.

Here as you can see, we have a change to part A making clear that the quota of 30% by 2025 and 40% by 2030 refers to both Women and Men, so two additions to A and then again changing the word regular to annual reporting so we will poll you now on original or revised wording again. There are two questions because of the different changes so make your choice and then click submit please.

Ok, here we go, revised wording seems to be the trend of the day to go for the revised wording.

Ok, so here we have the change, making it clear that the family-friendly practices should apply to all representatives elected to Public Office and not just those in the Oireachtas and we will poll you on that revised wording now please.

Just one question this time.

Ok, we can close that one - revised wording - that's clear thank you and then the last one.

Now here there are quite a few more words to be added one in the introduction to the recommendation to add the word reporting and then in section A you can see the text in front of you, it's just to be more explicit about what the Social Media companies have to do and the Press have to do.

Ok so original wording or revised wording when you've made your choice then just click submit.

Ok we can close - again revised wording by a big lead so that's it, so now we are going to put you back in the breakout groups just for a couple of minutes we need to transfer what you have just told us you want on to the ballot paper into the actual slides representing the ballot paper and then we are going to poll you, yes or no, do you want these questions on the ballot paper. So if you can just bear with us for about 10 - 15 minutes we will bring you back as soon as we can but we just need that physical time to check that the wording is correct on the slides and then we will zoom poll you on the actual ballot paper. So please, bear with us, for a little bit longer and when we bring you back we will be asking you to vote for the first time.

So it will be a very significant crossover from opinion into actual taking of decisions. So we will bring you back as soon as we can, but just if you could chat among yourselves in the breakout groups for about 10 to 15 minutes, we will be back to you as soon as possible, thank you very much.

Catherine Day - Welcome back again, now at this point in time we are going to do a zoom poll on whether the amended recommendations should be on the ballot paper so this time you will be just answering yes or no. One or two groups wanted to have the slide up on the screen while you are clicking and here we have technical issues with zoom in that, we can leave the slide up but part of it will be covered by the actual zoom poll but we will leave the slide up for longer and that's the best that we can do, given the technical constraints of zoom. So let's make a start and we will have recommendation 15 - 17 up first please Lena.

Ok, so here you see 3 questions, you can see that 15, there was no change to it, 16 you have now decided to put in the word 'Cabinet' before Minister and on 17 there was no change, so we will leave that on the screen and we will now poll you on these three questions on whether they should be included on the ballot paper.

Ok, so you can see it, so here you have to answer yes or no to 3 questions, take your time and when you are ready then please click submit.

Ok, so we can take down that slide and you can see very large endorsement of the questions going on the ballot paper, ok, then we will move on to Number 18.

Ok, so here you see again Number 18 and Number 19, none of these were amended this morning, so can you agree that questions 18 and 19 A and 19 B go on the ballot paper please, so yes or no to each of these 3 questions and then click submit.

Ok I think that's pretty convincing this is all about whether the question should go on the ballot paper or not, that's good, so then we will come with the next Bloc of questions starting with recommendation 20. So here we amended 20B so 'example' is no longer there I think the others are unchanged.

Ok, so we will poll you now on those questions, again yes or no each time and then submit. So now, again very clear responses from all of you, thank you then we are moving on now to question 21A and 21B. I think we didn't make any changes to this, this morning, ok so we will poll you on those 2 questions now on parts A and B.

Ok, and the result is very clear, then we will move on to question 22. So now we have on screen question 22 A & B, again, these were not changed this morning, just take a moment to read them, you also have the paper copy that you received, because this hasn't changed and we will now poll you. That's very clear, great thank you and we will move to question 23.

Ok, so question 23 has part A and part B and then question 24 and these were not changed, you didn't ask for any changes to this this morning. So it is as you have received on the paper version and we will poll you now on these so when you are ready click submit please.

Ok, then these will also be on the ballot paper, we will move to question 25. So 25 A, B and C here, we did make some changes on these, this morning and we will poll you now on that again. 3 questions to answer and then please click submit. Your answer is yes, very clear, ok, thank you, we are now moving on to question 26. 26 A & B, we didn't amend this, this morning, so they are as you have received already and we will poll you on those now.

Ok, here is the result of the poll, again very convincing. We are now moving on to question 27. So 27, again with the revised wording that you have expressed a preference for and we will poll you now on that, now under revised wording again. 3 questions to answer, yes or no, each time please and then click submit.

Ok, fine more nuanced, but still very clear majority, thank you and then we will come to question 28. So 28 A & B, if you remember we did adjust the wording of B this morning and this is the revised wording that you are now being asked to express whether it should be on the ballot paper. So we will poll you on this now. There we are, with the result, so that's question 28 then 29 is the next one. This one we had a bit of discussion about, we have made the revisions and so you will be asked to give your view on each of the sections 29 A, B and C and we will poll you on that now, there you go. Ok and again all of those will be on the ballot paper, thank you.

So here comes question 30. Again we have changed the wording in the introduction to question 30 and that's it, just all representatives elected to Public office so we will poll you now on whether you think this should be on the ballot paper. 2 questions, yes or no, answer each time, please indicate your preference now, your answers are yes, this will be on the ballot paper.

I think, I'm right in saying question 31 is the last one and here again, this was the subject of a lot of discussion this morning, particularly 31A & 31B, we have added in the word 'reporting' and in 31A we have made it more specific and we will just poll you on that now. 2 questions to finish this part. The results are that, this will be the ballot paper.

Ok, now, although it's getting on to lunchtime we have something very important to do next because now for the first time you will actually be voting, up to now you have just been expressing wishes/preferences, deciding between alternatives, but now you are actually going to vote. So this is a very big moment that we have all been working towards since January last year. The first two items that you will vote on are going to be the sequential questions on Article 41 of the Constitution. So these are questions 1 and 4 under bloc A of your ballot paper. You are going to see them in a moment, don't worry and they are sent out in Document 3 of your pack. So briefly the first question on which you are going to vote relates to Article 41.2 of the Constitution. That is what we have been talking about as the woman in the home clause, all the time. So now you are being asked to choose between recommending to make no change to the Constitution, so to leave the wording as it is or to make a change if the majority votes in favour of making a change. We will then have you vote on further options later in the day if the majority votes for no change then that's the end of the discussion on this part of the Constitution that's question 1. And question 4 relates to recognising the family in the Constitution. Here again you are asked to choose between continuing to provide recognition for the family in the Constitution or not to continue, here too, if the majority votes yes to the question you will be asked to vote on further options later in the day. That is the first set of questions, the second thing that you will vote on immediately after the first two are bloc B, the recommendations on Care that you agreed back in March.

So in a moment when I finish speaking you can use your personal mi-voice link to vote by clicking on the green button on your voting email, if possible, please don't leave the zoom meeting but don't worry if you do accidentally leave continue to vote, finish your voting and then the Secretariat will let you back in again, If you click on the link to join the meeting again. If you have any problems with the voting system please contact mi-voice by phone and the number is [number removed] or by email at [email removed]. We are going to give you 30 minutes to vote and voting will close at approximately 1:30pm, if you don't need 30 minutes, if you vote faster, you are free to go to lunch whenever you are finished voting. So please come back from lunch at 1:45pm but again, please don't leave the zoom

meeting, it is better to stay in the meeting while you go away and grab some lunch, but just please be back and ready to start work again at 1:45pm so up to you, how long you need to take to vote. You are voting on the first 2 questions on the Constitution and then you will be voting on the recommendations on Care and then please go away and take a break have your lunch or whatever. I'm starting to get quite peckish myself so fortify yourselves for the afternoon but please be back at 1:45pm having cast your first votes in the Assembly, so please use your mi-voice link now and go ahead and vote and you have up to 30 minutes to vote and we will see you again at 1:45pm. Thank you.

Catherine Day - We have all of the votes on the Constitutional questions are now in. There is just one person who has had technical problems, but I don't think that's going to change the outcome. We are now going to get the Returning Officer to check the outcome of the votes and when we have that I will come back and tell you the outcome of the voting on questions 1 & 4 and whether or not that leads us to a second round of questions on the Constitution. So, if you could just bear with us for another 5 or 10 minutes, I think it is important that the integrity of the vote is fully accounted and endorsed by the independent Returning Officer. We will come back to you on that, so sorry to interrupt the chat and please continue chatting among yourselves. I should be back to you shortly and tell you what the outcome of the first sequential vote on the Constitution and whether or not we go on to the second sequential vote on the Constitution. I will be back with you shortly.

Thanks for your patience.

Catherine Day - I was just thinking, sometimes there are advantages to being on zoom because if we were in Malahide you would all be queueing up to go into a small number of voting booths and then it would take longer to count the votes etc. I am just saying this because, I want to thank you for your patience, you probably think or some of you probably think it is taking a bit too long, but actually we are much faster than if we were physically in the same ballroom in Malahide and we were all queueing up to vote separately.

So without keeping you in suspense any longer, I am sure you want to hear the result of our first formal vote, which was the two sequential votes on Article 41 and here it is. So we had 89 people voting in both cases, on the 1st question: on the Woman in the home clause, 5 people felt that no change should be made, but 84 people that's 94% felt that there should be a change. So I will come back to the consequence of that in a moment but that is a very clear result and on the 2nd question on the recognition of the Family, again, 89 people voting, 83 people say yes the Constitution should continue to recognize the Family and 6 people said no. So again a very clear result so in the light of that vote, we are now going to move to the second sequential vote on the Constitution. This time you are going to be voting on questions 2 & 5, again, if you have come out of your voting email when you go back into it please click on the same green button that is where you will find questions 2 & 5. Now we are going to give you 30 minutes for this vote, that might seem a little bit long but some people did have technical difficulties on just getting logged on and then getting their vote accepted, so we will take 30 minutes, just to make sure that everyone vote can be counted and everyone can get through and then we will come back to you in 30 minutes time which is at 2:30pm. So you have 2 questions to vote on, questions 2 and 5 relating to Article 41 of the Constitution and we will see you again in 30 minutes for the next stage. Thanks a lot.

Catherine Day – While we are waiting for the votes to be counted and verified I'm going to maybe bring forward one aspect of the programme for this afternoon, because I think it will save time for us. That has to do with the draft letter to the Oireachtas that we have proposed, and the reason I want to do it now is that I think it will then give us more certainty about when we are going to finish this afternoon. I think everybody would appreciate that, so I want to start with a reminder, this draft letter that we have circulated and that you have been commenting on, it's not a binding recommendation you will remember that it is a way of putting a context around the recommendations that you are voting on. So we will not be voting at any time on the draft letter in the mi-voice system. That will stay between us, as something that is not binding. Now you remember that I drafted a version in which I tried to reflect the views that you have been giving to us throughout the whole process and you very kindly sent back comments and suggestions and I am very grateful for those. We have tried to include them as much as possible in the version that you received in your pack. In the survey while there was a general view that the principle of the letter was a good idea, there were mixed views among you as to whether the letter needed to be discussed in the breakout rooms or not. So I said that I would poll you on that and I am going to propose that we do that poll now. Then we can use the time that we are waiting for productively so if a majority want to have a discussion of the draft letter in breakout groups. We will do that after the next round of voting. If a majority don't think that we need a breakout room discussion then, we will see in the results in the zoom poll and we would be able to finish today's meeting once you have finished the next round of voting.

So what I want to know from you now is and we are going to poll you on this, do you want to have a breakout group discussion on the text of the draft letter, that would be after the next round of voting or are you content enough to agree the current revised version of the letter. So we are going to poll you now and please indicate if you're happy with the letter as it stands or if you feel you want the opportunity to have a further discussion in the breakout groups. Both are fine by us, it's just to get the mood of the meeting at this stage.

So if you could please indicate your preference now either you do want a discussion or you are happy with the revised version of the letter just indicate your choice now and then as always please click submit. We will see where the majority lands. Thanks very much. Somebody says, I just see on the chat line, somebody has said there's a section in parenthesis will it be included, well that would only be included after the voting tomorrow on that question. So if the vote is positive on that question it will go in if the vote is negative it would not go in the letter. Are we there, ok, so I think that's pretty convincing, so thank you for that, I am really grateful to those who suggested changes in the wording of the letter, I am equally grateful to all of you for deciding that you are happy with the letter as it stands now. So, ok, I'm just going to see where we are with the outcome of this voting on the second sequential session question and then I will come back to you with our guidance on the final round of voting for today so just bear with me a little bit longer please.

Catherine Day – So I see from the discussion, are you now happy for the letter to go forward, the letter would only be finalised when we have counted all the votes tomorrow, because of the question in brackets on whether or not you are willing to pay extra for the recommendations that you are advocating. So can we just poll you again on that please? I know it is a lot of backwards and forwards but we have to be sure each time that the majority is happy with the outcome. So can we poll you on that now please, Darren can you put up that poll so do you agree that the revised letter should accompany your recommendations to be sent to the Oireachtas?

Ok Darren is telling me we have a result now, oh yes, ok that's fine, I think that's convincing enough thank you very much we will finalise the letter at the end of tomorrow when you voted on everything else.

Catherine Day - We now have the results of the Luxembourg jury, so in the second sequential vote this is how you voted, 89 people voted, on simply delete, 14 people voted in favour of simply deleting, that 16% in favour of simply delete but 75 people voted for delete and replace, so we should delete the current Article and replace it with something else that would not be gender specific and would refer to Care, that's 84% in favour.

So we are now going to put you to the third sequential vote on Article 41 which would be question 3 which will be again the wording that you have previously decided. So in this next vote now and this is the final vote of today you are going to vote on question 3 which is the ultimate question on the Constitution and immediately you should follow on with blocs C – E. So those are all the recommendations that we looked at and some of which you amended today and that will be the final vote of today. When you go on voting in a minute, you will be using the second, red button so vote to the end of the red button and when you click confirm that means your vote is registered and you won't be able to check back on it. I do want to just say though because once you have voted you can leave the meeting for today, I'm sure it will be with relief because I know it's been very intense, but you've been great to stick with it. I really want to thank you once again for showing your ownership of the process, I think that the changes that you have introduced in the wording of the ballot papers improve them and will give them greater impact. I am also very appreciative of the fact that you have respected the few rules that we sat about needing a majority in the breakout group to propose a change of the recommendations and also that you have stuck to substantive changes to the recommendations. I think that this really contributed to the success of today and that it also argues very well for tomorrow. So tomorrow, I'm afraid it's early rise again, we are going to start at 9am, but I think it was a wise decision for today and hopefully for tomorrow. There will be a separate zoom link for tomorrow's meeting, we will send that on to you later. So you have it handy for tomorrow. So, we are going to invite you now to vote on the red button and remember you need to answer the last question on the Constitution and then you need to give your opinion on each recommendation from 16 to 31, that's Blocs C, D and E.

So happy voting have a well-earned break this evening, have a good night's sleep tonight and come back full of energy tomorrow morning at 9am or log on a bit before 9am so we can start at 9. I really look forward to it, but again, I think we have made fantastic progress today, when we were doing all the planning and the calculating I really didn't think that we would get to this point at just gone 3pm on Saturday afternoon, so I'm really extremely grateful to all of you for working so cohesively as a team and I think with very good results. So back to your voting now and then we will see you all tomorrow at 9:00am and thanks again, I really appreciate it.