

# IRELAND VOTES YES

## to Equal Marriage: How a minority won a majority

**Tiernan Brady** (Political Director of Yes Equality / the policy officer of The GLEN)

**18:30-20:00, October 5, 2015, Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University**

In May 2015 Ireland became the first country in the world to vote for equal marriage for lesbian and gay people by referendum of the people. Remarkably, it was passed with a landslide public vote of 63% and with the support of every political party in the country. Why did this largely Catholic country decide to vote Yes?

This talk will look at how a minority managed to win over the majority on a civil and human rights issue. It will set out some of the key strategic decisions in the run up to the referendum including: setting the tone of the debate; engaging with the middle ground; framing the debate; using credible voices to create empathy; winning over all the political parties. It will look at how connecting the issue of equality for lesbian and gay people with the values that society already held dearest such as a strong sense of fairness, generosity and family values was a key component of victory rather than engaging in a campaign that challenged voters to change their traditional values. It will also examine the importance of the use of real stories from people's lives as a critical factor in winning people over rather focussing on a civil or human rights based discussion.

Finally, it will look at what learning, if any, is transferable as a way of assisting others in the work on delivering equality.

Tiernan Brady is the Political Director of Yes Equality, the campaign for civil marriage equality in Ireland. He is also the policy officer of GLEN – The Gay and Lesbian Equality Network. He previously was the Director of Organisation for the deputy Prime Minister as well as mayor of his hometown, Bundoran.

No prior registration required/ Lecture in English