

## **Atheist Ireland**

7 Dargle Road  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9  
3 November 2017

To Marcella Joyce  
Census 2021 Consultation  
Central Statistics Office



### **Consultation Process for 2021 Census — Ethnic or Cultural Question**

Dear Marcella,

We have sent a submission regarding the Religion question, and we look forward to taking part in the discussions of the subgroup of the Advisory Group that will be addressing the Religion question.

This is a separate submission on the question about Ethnic or Cultural Background. As there is sometimes an overlap between religion, ethnicity and culture, we would like to have an input into this discussion as well.

We are aware that the Immigrant Council of Ireland has also made a submission about this question, and we share their concerns about the phrasing of the current question.

In particular we find the following aspects of the current question confusing:

- What does 'Background' mean? Does it mean your ancestral history, and if so, how far back? At some stage back we are all 'Mixed Background', which is a later subcategory.
- Whatever people interpret the word 'Background' to mean, most people will fit into several of the listed categories, yet people are asked to choose only one category.
- Why is 'White Irish' treated as a subcategory of 'White', but 'Black Irish' and 'Asian Irish' are treated as alternatives to 'Black' and 'Asian' within the main categories?
- The phrase 'Black or Black Irish' implies that these are separate concepts. If you are grouping these together, it would be more accurate to say 'Black including Black Irish'.
- Why are 'Black Irish' people subcategorised on the basis of not being African? Why are 'Asian Irish' people subcategorised on the basis of not being Chinese?
- Why is 'Irish Traveller' a subcategory of 'White'? Are all Irish Travellers White?

Overall, this question is confusing and it seems unlikely to produce accurate, unambiguous or useful answers. We encourage you to take account of the input of the Immigrant Council of Ireland and other groups who work directly in this area, and we would like to also have an input ourselves on the basis of the overlap between religion, ethnicity and culture.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Nugent  
Chairperson,  
Atheist Ireland