Coalition of CSOs voice concern over proposed International Protection Bill 2026

The Coalition on the EU Migration Pact, composed of civil society organisations, has raised serious concerns about the proposed International Protection Bill 2026, after a preliminary review of the bill was published by the Minister for Justice. The bill will transpose the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum into Irish legislation.

The coalition calls for the following safeguards in the International Protection Bill 2026:

- Legal rights: All applicants have the right to independent legal advice and representation throughout the protection process;
- Freedom of movement: No applicant should have their freedom of movement restricted, unless prescribed by law;
- Protection of vulnerable applicants: Vulnerable applicants have the right to a needs assessment, retaining existing safeguards, and exclusion from accelerated border procedures that might result in curtailment of their fundamental rights;
- Best interest of the child: Ensure a rights-based approach to age assessment, reflecting international best practice, underpinned by the best interest of the child;
- Border procedure: The border procedure should be limited to exceptional cases, and not used indiscriminately as the norm;
- Reception and capacity: Provision for adequate reception facilities and contingency planning;
- Appeals: The option for in-person appeals is maintained;
- Oversight: Ensure effective and independent oversight via the Chief Inspector’s role;
- Garda powers: Ensure that any and all expansion of Garda powers fully aligns with human rights law and standards, and that any interference with rights to liberty, freedom of movement, privacy or bodily integrity is clearly prescribed by law;
- Detention: Exclude the concept of detention (currently non-existent in the Irish protection system). Detention should only ever be used as a measure of last resort, when proportionate and necessary, and under no circumstances be applied to a child.

Source(s)

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- Irish Refugee Council (22 January, 2026), [Civil society Coalition slams new International Protection Bill], https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/media-centre/press-releases/civil-society-coalition-slams-new-international-protection-bill/

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