

31 May 2022

246th COMMISSION MEETING

Held in the Commission's Offices, Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8ED and via Teams

Present: Alyson Kilpatrick, Chief Commissioner
Helen Henderson
Jonathan Kearney
David A Lavery CB
Eddie Rooney
Stephen White

In attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant (to Chief
Commissioner and Chief Executive)
Éilis Haughey, Director (Human Rights after EU
Withdrawal) (agenda items 1, 2, 3 +11)
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and
Communications) (agenda items 1, 2, 3, 7 + 11)
Laura Banks, Solicitor (agenda item 9)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Margie McKay, Boardroom Apprentice, Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) and Rhyannon Blythe, Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government).
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interests.

2. Minutes of the 245th Commission meeting

2.1 The minutes of the 245th Commission meeting held on 25 April 2022 were agreed as an accurate record following a minor amendment.

Action: Minutes of the 245th Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website.

3. Chief Commissioner's report

3.1 The Chief Commissioner's report was noted.

4. Commissioners' Reports

4.1 Commissioner Henderson reported on her attendance at the Sport and Human Rights Forum and her attendance at an event in Queens University on Neoliberalism and Human Rights.

4.2 Commissioner Lavery highlighted the press statement from the Law Society on the Legacy Bill.

5. Chief Executive's Report

5.1 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on staffing, with recruitment completed on the Policy and Research post, with a temporary one-year contract being offered.

5.2 The Chief Executive provided an update on the request for an Independent Review where there has been no progress on the Terms of Reference for the review and on the Framework Document that is due to be finalised in the coming days.

Action: The Chief Executive to share the Framework Document with Commissioners.

6. Finance Report including Cash Flow Report

6.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the Finance Report which has not been submitted due to work pressures around

the Annual Report and Accounts.

- 6.2 The Chief Executive assured Commissioners that there was nothing untoward to report and that full report will be in the June Commission meeting papers.

7. Engagement and Communications report

- 7.1 The Director (Engagement and Communications) updated Commissioners on the work of the Engagement and Communications team. This included highlighting the media interviews around the Legacy Legislation.
- 7.2 The Director (Engagement and Communications) reported on training delivered to the Centre for Applied Learning for staff from Department of Education, Department of Health, The Executive Office, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural affairs, Department of Finance and the Department of Communities that took place at the end of March.
- 7.3 The Director (Engagement and Communications) updated on the school visit to Movilla High School, Newtownards on 10 May and the presentation to the Co-operation Ireland youth event in Belfast on 22 March.
- 7.4 Commissioners were provided further updates on the Business and Human Rights Forum due to take place on 22 June and the NI Sport and Human Rights Forum that took place on 4 May and on the 'general leaflet' resource that has been produced and translated into Polish, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Lithuanian, and Romanian.

8. Legal functions report

- 8.1 The Solicitor provided an update on:
- JR123 (Rehabilitation of Offenders): still ongoing with no decision yet made.
 - RSE: currently receiving responses to the pre-action letters.
 - SPUC (Challenge on Abortion Regulations 2021): no

further update from the last meeting.

9. Legal Application for further assistance

- 9.1 The Solicitor briefed Commissioners on the application for further assistance.
- 9.2 Commissioners discussed the application for further assistance including the legal opinion received. Commissioners agreed that the Commission would support the client to the Court of Appeal.

10. Review of legal decision

- 10.1 The Chief Executive outlined the review of the legal decision of staff.
- 10.2 Following discussion and working through the questions raised in the paper, Commissioners support the decision made by staff.

11. Dedicated Mechanism report

- 11.1 The Director (Human Rights after EU Withdrawal) provided and update on the work of the Dedicated Mechanism since the last meeting. This included updates on meetings with TEO, BorderPeople, ENNHRI Working Group on Asylum and Migration, Westminster parliamentary officials, Home Office Vulnerability Advisory Group and presentations to the NICS Inter-departmental Working Group on Protocol Article 2 and Human Rights Consortium.
- 11.2 The Director (Human Rights after EU Withdrawal) provided and update on the policy and legislation work that the Dedicated Mechanism is working on. This included updates on the Nationality and Borders Act, Elections Act and a joint NIHRC/ECNI submission made to Retained EU Law Inquiry by European Scrutiny Committee.
- 11.3 A further update was provided on the Dedicated Mechanism

Annual Report launch due to take place in early July and the launch of the Human Trafficking research on 26 May and the Health research on 7 June.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 The Chief Commissioner raised the response to the Legacy Bill and the upcoming evidence session she is due to give to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on 7 June. Commissioners discussed this and agreed with the approach currently being taken.

13. Induction refresher session on Legal work

- 13.1 This item is taking place in June.

The meeting closed at 12:40pm.