



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

**26 February 2024**

## **264<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING**

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

**Present:** Alyson Kilpatrick  
Helen Henderson  
Jonathan Kearney  
Justin Kouame  
David Lavery  
Stephen White

**In attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive  
Rebecca Magee, Executive Assistant  
Rhyannon Blythe, Director (Legal Services)  
Colin Caughey, Director (Advice to Government,  
Research, and Investigations)  
Éilís Haughey, Director (Human Rights after EU  
Withdrawal)  
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and  
Communications)  
Lisa Wilson, Senior Communications & Education Officer  
(agenda item 8)  
Jason McKeown, Senior Communications & Education  
Officer (agenda item 8)  
Michael Black, Solicitor (agenda item 9)  
Vivienne Fitzroy, Boardroom Apprentice

## **1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel & Corporate Affairs)
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Draft Minutes of the 263<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting and Closed Minute**

- 2.1 The minutes of the 263<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting held on 29 January 2024 were agreed following a minor amendment.

**Action: Minutes of the 263<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting to uploaded to the website.**

- 2.2 The closed minutes of the 263<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting were approved.

## **3. Chief Commissioner's report**

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner's report was noted.

## **4. Commissioners' report**

- 4.1 Commissioner White reported on the Anglo-Irish Friendships event held in Parliament Buildings, that was sponsored by Queens University.
- 4.2 Commissioner White also reported that he was attending a consultation event relating to the Museum of the Troubles and Peace.

## **5. Chief Executive report**

- 5.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on the Economic Baseline review, which included confirmation that the chair of the panel has been appointed. In due course, meetings will be arranged with the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive, and then with Commissioners.

5.2 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on the business case to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in relation to the development of a legal entity. It was noted that A&L Goodbody have been appointed for legal advices. Meetings will take place in London in early March with the Rwandan and Samoa NHRIs in attendance. The business case will be submitted following those meetings.

## 6. Finance report

6.1 The Chief Executive presented the finance reports for core and dedicated mechanism expenditure to the end of January 2024.

## 7. Draft Business Plan 2024-25

7.1 The Chief Executive presented Commissioners with the first draft of the Business Plan for 2024-25.

7.2 Commissioners discussed the draft Business Plan 2024-25 and approved the draft albeit the Chief Commissioner foreword and the budget are still to be completed. A further version will come to the March board meeting.

**Action: Final draft Business Plan 2024-25 with completed foreword and budget to be approved at March Commission meeting.**

## 8. KPI Functions update – Communications and Engagement

8.1 The Senior Communications & Engagement Officers provided an update on the progress of the key performance indicators for the following areas:

- Communications Strategy
- Media coverage
- DM campaigns
- Podcast
- Website

- Social media
- E-newsletter

## 9. Team Updates

### Dedicated Mechanism

- 9.1 The Director (Human Rights after EU Withdrawal) provided updates on the following:
- Policy submission on EU Law
  - IMA hearing regarding Article 2
  - The research into CRPD has been delayed
  - Staff training with the Academy of EU Law
  - Internal Audit was completed and the report has been received

### Policy

- 9.2 The Director (Advice to Government, Research, and Investigations) provided updates on the following:
- A visit to NI by COMEX
  - A meeting with Ms. Reem Alsalem, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences
  - Upcoming policy work in Geneva on CRPD and ICCPR

### Legal

- 9.3 The Director (Legal Services) provided updates on the following:
- Housing (Challenge to NIHE policy on intimidation points): Hearing is listed for 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024
  - JR123 (Rehabilitation of Offenders Order): Supreme Court hearing listed for 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024
  - Own motion challenge to the Illegal Migration Act: hearing has taken place and awaiting judgement
  - Legacy: Judgment is expected on 28 February

**Action: Director (Legal Services) to share Legacy Judgment with Commissioners once available.**

- 9.4 The Director (Legal Services) and Solicitor presented Commissioners with an Application for Assistance where Commissioners were asked to consider approving an application to intervene in the inter-state case brought to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) by Ireland against the UK, which challenges the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 (Legacy Act) compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
- 9.5 Following discussion, Commissioners supported the staff recommendation that the Commission should support an application to intervene, seeking both written and oral submissions.
- 9.6 Commissioner Lavery would like to note that he has reservations around intervening due to the domestic challenge into Legacy still ongoing, but ultimately supports the application to intervene.
- 9.7 Commissioner Kearney would like to note that he echoes the concerns of Commissioner Lavery but also, ultimately supports the application to intervene.

## **10. Any other Business**

- 10.1 Commissioners and staff would like to congratulate the Chief Commissioner on her appointment to the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) Board and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Bureau of representatives.

The meeting closed at 12:40pm