

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 25th MEETING OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
TWO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS ON THE
ISLAND OF IRELAND
(THE JOINT COMMITTEE)**

**Held on 3 September 2008 in the premises of the
Irish Human Rights Commission, Dublin**

Present:

IHRC

Commissioners:

Maurice Manning, President (Chair)
Michael Farrell
Suzanne Egan
William Binchy

Staff:

Éamonn MacAodha, Chief Executive
Kirsten Roberts, Director of Research, Policy & Promotion

NIHRC

Commissioners:

Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner
Tom Duncan
Alan Henry
Ann Hope
Colm Larkin
Daphne Trimble

IHRC/NIHRC

In attendance:

Brian Gormally, Joint Contractor

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Colin Harvey, Eamonn O'Neill,
Geraldine Rice and Peter O'Neill

2. WELCOME

The President welcomed all those present and complimented Monica McWilliams and her colleagues in the NIHRC on their re-appointment. He noted that the mandate of he and his colleagues had 3 ½ years to run and he looked forward to carrying forward joint work in that period.

3. MINUTES OF 24th MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

The minutes were approved and signed by both the Chief Commissioner and the President.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising not included on the agenda.

5. UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES OF THE TWO COMMISSIONS

The Chief Executive of the IHRC and the Chief Commissioner of the NIHRC presented papers detailing recent activities.

6. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports from the two sub-committee meetings that had met earlier during the day were considered.

In regard to the Racism sub-committee, members reported on the relevant work of each commission and noted a high degree of commonality. In respect of the Migrant Workers Convention members had confirmed that they were anxious to work jointly on the matter.

In relation to the Charter sub-committee, a review of the work of the sub-committee up until now had been prepared by Brian Gormally and was tabled and discussed. The following actions were recommended to the Joint Committee:

- The review document should be circulated to all Commissioners
- The Policy and Support Contractor should prepare a discussion document, in consultation with sub-committee members and any other interested commissioners, analysing the mandate of the Joint Committee with respect to the Charter and discussing the issues and processes that might be involved in developing a Charter and its possible roles and functions

- The above document would be discussed by the sub-committee at its next meeting. Thereafter, work on the Charter should be a main focus of the Joint Committee's work and substantive discussions on it should be held in plenary session

The above actions were agreed.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT COMMITTEE AND WORK PLAN OF JOINT CONTRACTOR

The following work plan was put to the Joint Committee and Brian Gormally spoke to it:

September to December 2008

- Production of a paper containing the key arguments relevant to the island of Ireland for ratification of the Migrant Workers Convention and proposal for development of a process of consultation with NGOs and other agencies working with migrant workers on the likely practical impact of ratification for consideration by the Joint Committee
- Drafting an outline Strategic Plan for consideration by the Joint Committee
- Development of a paper scoping the process of a review of human rights protections in both jurisdictions for consideration by the Joint Committee
- Development of an options or discussion paper on possible ways forward for the Charter for consideration by the Joint Committee
- Service meetings of the sub-committees and the Joint Committee

January to December 2009

- Finalising Strategic Plan for the Joint Committee
- Development of proposal for organising consultation with the other UK Commissions and with the European

Group with the aim of securing a common commitment to ratification of Migrant Workers Convention for consideration by the Joint Committee

- Organising and supporting progressive review of human rights protections in the two jurisdictions
- Development of proposal for work on the organisation of a roundtable on the Charter, including consultation with key stakeholders on Charter options
- Service meetings of the sub-committees and the Joint Committee

The above work plan was agreed.

8. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The IHRC reported on the following upcoming events:

5th Roundtable of NHRIs and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights would be held 16-17 September 2008, O'Reilly Hall, UCD. Preparations for this event were reaching the final stages.

Work was also ongoing to finalise the agenda and arrangements for the European Group meeting which would follow the Council of Europe/NHRI Roundtable.

The IHRC would convene a breakfast meeting of the Scottish, NI and UK Commissions, the "Four Jurisdictions" Group, on the margins of the NHRI Roundtable. This meeting would discuss a paper proposing future arrangements for the group prepared by Éamonn MacAodha.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion on the use of Tasers. It was noted that the first use by the PSNI had occurred recently. It was agreed that Brian Gormally should produce a brief paper on the subject for the next meeting.

10. DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in the second week of January in Belfast.