



Helen McEntee T.D.,

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Jim O'Callaghan T.D.,

Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

09 February 2026

Dear Ministers,

Further to my letters of 1st and 12th December 2025, I am sending a submission to your departments which sets out the concerns of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) in relation to the development of a Political Declaration on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Migration to be adopted at the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers meeting in Chisinau, Moldova, May 2026.

We note also the recent call by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Michael O'Flaherty for all member States to undertake their deliberations with regard to this critical process with "the active participation of national human rights institutions and relevant civil society".

IHREC is concerned at the potential implications of this Political Declaration for the independence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), and for the wider protection of fundamental rights and the integrity of the European Convention system.

Ireland has been a staunch defender of the international human rights system for many decades. This is the foundation of our foreign policy and the bedrock of our democracy.

As a founding member of the Council of Europe, Ireland has been a strong supporter of the European Court of Human Rights and its independence for many decades and it is hoped that Ireland can play a key role in protecting this independence for the future.

IHREC believes that Ireland can play a positive and constructive role in the negotiation of the proposed Political Declaration in line with our proud record of support for the international



human rights system. We fully support Minister McEntee's recent statement that there has never been a greater need for the international human rights system and warmly welcome her commitment that Ireland will continue to be a friend, an advocate and a vigorous voice for human rights.

This is particularly important as Ireland prepares to assume the EU Presidency in July and seeks election to the UN Human Rights Council from January 2027 – December 2029. Not only is the normative foundation of the European human rights system at stake, so too is Ireland's credibility as a defender of the international rules-based order.

Is mise, le meas,

Liam Herrick

Chief Commissioner

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

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