



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Minutes

Extraordinary Commission Meeting

11 April 2023 | 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Online

Present:

- Chief Commissioner Sinéad Gibney
- Jim Clarken
- Dr Frank Conaty
- Prof Caroline Fennell
- Adam Harris
- Prof Kathleen Lynch
- Dr Rosaleen McDonagh
- Dr Lucy Michael
- Colm O' Dwyer SC

Apologies:

- Heydi Foster Breslin
- Michael Finucane
- Tony Geoghegan
- Dr Salome Mbugua
- Sunniva McDonagh SC
- Prof Ray Murphy

In attendance:

- Éimear Fisher, Acting Director
- Muireann Ní Thuairisg, Minute taker

1.1 Apologies, Quorum and Declaration of Interest

Apologies were noted from HFB, MF, TG, SM, SMcD and RM. There were no declarations of interest and the meeting was quorate.

2.1 Closed session

The Commission met in closed session, without the Executive present. The Chief Commissioner agreed to gather input from commission members to inform any legal advice arising from dealing with current issues.

3.1 Communication between Commission and Executive

Members discussed a memo from the Acting Director regarding the communication between the Commission and the Executive.

SG noted that it was important for the Commission to meet and discuss how they can resolve the recent communication difficulties. SG stated that she believes Commission members are working well together and that she is hopeful members can work as a collective and resolve the difficulties that have recently arisen.

There was a discussion on the impact of the recent communication difficulties on staff, the importance of treating staff and one another with respect and the ways in which to resolve the difficulties.

SG recognised the need for greater clarity on the role of commission members. A board evaluation is underway which will assist with this clarity, in particular with new commission members due to start in the coming months.

It was agreed to give consideration to establishing a small working group who could review the matters in question. It was further agreed to discuss these issues in the context of the board evaluation, already scheduled for the next Commission meeting.

4.1 PRC Issues

Members discussed recent communications in relation to the Policy and Research Committee, including the purpose and work of the Committee.

SG explained that as an email from the PRC Chairperson was circulated to PRC members, the matter was brought to the attention of all commission members and an extraordinary commission meeting was convened at the earliest opportunity.

Members expressed their respect for the former PRC Chair and understood the reasons for highlighting concerns. Members discussed the importance of having space for dissent, raising concerns and asking difficult questions.

It was agreed to give consideration to requesting the Audit and Risk Committee to review the questions raised by the former PRC Chair.

It was agreed to continue the discussion at the next Commission meeting under a standalone item.

[REDACTED]

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