

Minutes

72nd Ordinary Commission Meeting

25 April 2024 | 2:00pm – 4:45pm

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 16-22 Green St., Dublin 7 & Online

Present:

- Dr Lucy Michael, Chair, (LM)
- Noeline Blackwell (NB)
- Jim Clarken (JC)
- Michael Finucane (MF)
- Dr Andrew Forde (AF) – remotely
- Prof Colin Harvey (CH) – remotely
- Prof Kathleen Lynch (KL)
- Dr Salome Mbugua (SM)
- Dr Rosaleen McDonagh (RMD)
- Sunniva McDonagh, SC, (SMD)
- Prof Ray Murphy (RM)
- Eoin Ronayne (ER)

Apologies:

- Caoilfhionn Gallagher, KC, (CG)
- Adam Harris (AH)

In attendance:

- Deirdre Malone, Director (DM)
- Barry Price, Office of the Director (BP) for item 1.2
- Jean O'Mahony, Head of Strategic Engagement for items 3.1, 4.1 and 7.1
- Fidelma Joyce, Strategic Engagement for item 3.1
- Karen Joynt, Strategic Engagement for item 4.1
- Naomi Kennan, Policy and Research for item 5.1
- Connor King, Policy and Research for item 5.1
- Maria Mullan, Policy and Research for item 6.1
- Rebecca Keatinge, Legal for item 8.1
- Louise Moloney (minute-taker)

The 72nd Ordinary Meeting of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission took place on 25 April 2024 from 2pm – 4:45pm in the IHREC Offices and online. LM was confirmed as chair in advance of the meeting.

1.1 Apologies, Quorum and Declaration of Interest

Apologies were noted from CG and AH. The meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of interest.

1.2 Reflection on Thought Forum and Strategic Planning update

Barry Price joined the meeting for this item.

The Commission discussed the first in the series of Thought Forums which had taken place earlier in the day on the topic of 'Keeping Hate out of Communities'. The Commission agreed that it was a highly informative and engaging event, and that the insights arising will be useful in the strategic planning process.

The next Thought Forum will take place on 6 June 2024 and will consider 'Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation'.

The public consultation on the Commission's next strategy statement has now closed and work is underway to review the submissions received.

Barry Price left the meeting.

1.3 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of 16 April 2024 were circulated in advance and approved, subject to one amendment, proposed by NB and seconded by ER.

The minutes of the 71st Ordinary Commission Meeting of 14 March 2024 were circulated in advance and approved, subject to minor amendments, proposed by KL and seconded by NB.

1.4 Matters Arising, not otherwise dealt with on the Agenda

There were no matters arising.

1.5 Director's Report

The Director's Report was circulated in advance and taken as read.

DM provided an update on the meeting with Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth regarding the Estimates for 2024. DM will meet with the Minister again in June to discuss further.

DM gave an update on the issue of indemnity insurance noting that she has met with an underwriter to discuss. A matrix of risk will be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee ahead of their next meeting.

1.6 Commission Engagement Update

LM thanked the Commission for all the recent engagements undertaken in this busy period.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Conference will take place on 18 September 2024 and will be added to the Commission calendar.

2.1 Committee Updates

a) Casework Committee

The note of the Casework Committee meeting of 15 April 2024 was circulated in advance and taken as read.

3.1 Briefing on WEAC Conference

Jean O'Mahony and Fidelma Joyce joined the meeting for this item.

The Worker and Employer Advisory Committee Conference on *Achieving Equality at Work: Promoting Socio-Economic Equality in Employment* will take place on 9 May 2024 in Dublin Castle. The draft programme was circulated to Commission Members in advance.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Professor Olivier de Schutter, will give the key-note address.

RM left the meeting.

Jean O'Mahony and Fidelma Joyce left the meeting

4.1 Red C Ageism Impact Report

Jean O'Mahony and Karen Joynt joined the meeting for this item.

A summary of the recent ageism equality public awareness campaign was provided to Commission Members along with the results of research carried out by a contracted provider. The research measured campaign awareness and impact of the creative aimed at highlighting the challenges of Ageism in Ireland.

The Strategic Engagement team are considering how to maximise media spend in the next strategic period.

Jean O'Mahony and Karen Joynt left the meeting.

5.1 CPT Submission

Naomi Kennan and Connor King joined the meeting for this item.

The draft Submission to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was circulated to Commission Members in advance.

The Commission approved the draft for finalisation subject to amendments. The Commission were invited to give further feedback via email by close of business Monday, 29 April 2024.

LM and DM will discuss, more generally, the most effective way for Commission Members to give feedback on substantive documents.

Naomi Kennan and Connor King left the meeting.

6.1 Submission on the GS of the Recording Devices (Amendment) Bill

Maria Mullan joined the meeting for this item.

The draft Submission on the General Scheme of the Garda Síochána (Digital Recording)(Amendment) Bill was circulated to Commission Members in advance.

The Commission approved the draft for finalisation subject to amendments. The Commission were invited to give further feedback via email by close of business Monday, 29 April 2024.

Maria Mullan left the meeting.

7.1 PSD Review of an IP Centre

Jean O'Mahony joined the meeting for this item.

A memo was circulated to Commission Members in advance. The purpose of this memo was to facilitate deliberation of issues arising in the consideration of the use of the Commission's Section 42(5) power for the first time. In particular, to advise the Commission of the matters particular to the exercise of powers in relation to a discrete function of a government department.

A further discussion will be tabled at the June Commission Meeting.

Jean O'Mahony left the meeting.

8.1 Traveller Accommodation EAP Accounts

Rebecca Keatinge joined the meeting for this item.

The Commission agreed to proceed with the publication of the seven accounts of the Equality Action Plans on the website of the Commission and to reference such publication in the Commission's Annual Report 2023.

A press release will also be issued.

Rebecca Keatinge left the meeting.

9.1 AOB

In anticipation of a general election and new programme for government, it is proposed to prepare a short document to furnish to political parties to inform the drafting of election manifestos. This document will include recommendations on policy and reform.

The Commission discussed the recent decision of the DPP not to prosecute the Gardaí involved in the shooting of George Nkencho in December 2020. The Commission was concerned to ensure communities were assured that the Commission is closely monitoring the situation and will consider the outcome of any request for review of the decision by the family.

The meeting closed at 5:40pm.