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## PRESS RELEASE

### **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

On International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland highlights the importance of advancing racial equality in Northern Ireland and calls for government action to address inequalities experienced by people belonging to national and ethnic minorities.

'We have welcomed people from all over the world who have chosen to make Northern Ireland their home', said Dr. Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner. 'They have made a valuable and important contribution to both the NI economy and to our wider society. We must work to effectively tackle prejudicial attitudes and race hate crime in Northern Ireland, including those that may arise as a result of the negotiations on UK's exit from the European Union'.

The Commission continues to be concerned about the shortcomings in Northern Ireland's race equality legislation and believes that reform of race equality laws is fundamental to advancing racial equality in Northern Ireland.

Chief Commissioner, Dr. Michael Wardlow said "European Union law has brought significant changes to Northern Ireland equality law framework including improved protections against discrimination for people from an ethnic minority background. In the context of the triggering of Article 50 next week, we want to see high level commitment to ensuring there is no weakening of those protections under equality law as well as to enhance this legal framework so that promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland are addressed as a priority."

- Please see blog: [Council of Europe Committee endorses need for race law reform](#)