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## PRESS RELEASE

### First board meeting of Commissions following Brexit

The first joint Board meeting of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission took place today at the Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk.

The three Chief Commissioners, Geraldine McGahey, ECNI, Alyson Kilpatrick, NIHRC and Sinéad Gibney, IHREC, said the joint working is important.

*“As we emerge from both the pandemic and the immediate impact of the UK’s withdrawal, we are sensitive that this is a delicate time for human rights and equality across the globe, but particularly in Northern Ireland, and we intend to build on our positive working relationship to ensure that we protect and promote the rights and equality of everyone on this island.”*

The meeting was to review and plan the work of the three Commissions on overseeing and reporting on the equality and human rights issues of people in Ireland with an all island dimension following Brexit.

The meeting heard via video from Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Conor Burns, MP, and Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, TD.

In Article 2 (1) of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, the UK Government made a commitment to protecting certain equality and human rights in Northern Ireland after Brexit. The two Northern Ireland bodies have been given additional roles and responsibilities to oversee this commitment and to ensure that it is upheld. They work in partnership with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission on equality and human rights issues relevant to the UK Government’s commitment that have an island of Ireland dimension.

To find out more about the UK Government’s commitment under Article 2 of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol or about making a complaint in the event of an alleged breach of this commitment, please contact the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland [www.equalityni.org/brexit](http://www.equalityni.org/brexit) or the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission [www.nihrc.org/human-rights-after-brexit](http://www.nihrc.org/human-rights-after-brexit)