



Simon Coveney TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Iveagh House
80 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2.

with copy to:

Michel Barnier, European Commission Chief Brexit Negotiator
Rt Hon. David Davis MP, British Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union

1 December 2017

Dear Minister,

At this critical moment in the Brexit negotiations, with the focus on the island of Ireland, fundamental questions about human rights and equality are at stake. As activists and organisations working in the area of human rights and equality across the island, we call on all parties to the present negotiations to give written guarantees that the core principles of rights and equality set out in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement of 1998 are respected.

At a minimum that means:

There must be no regression or diminution of existing human rights and equality guarantees for all people living in Northern Ireland and those rights protected under European Union law must be retained.

The principle of equivalence in human rights and equality protections between both parts of the island, as set out in the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, must continue to be respected.

The ongoing and fundamental protections provided by the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights must be retained together with the Human Rights Act, 1998.

There must continue to be equality in all areas between persons resident in Northern Ireland who identify as Irish citizens and those who identify as British citizens, including in relation to access to social welfare, health services and education.

The open border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and free movement for all persons across it must be retained. Nothing in any agreement on future border arrangements should lead to a more restrictive system of immigration controls within Northern Ireland or on the island as a whole. In particular, no form of ad hoc or targeted controls which are based on, or are likely to lead to racial profiling should be introduced.

We urge all parties to the current negotiations to ensure that these principles are fully considered at all stages in the Brexit process and that these principles are reflected in any agreement which is reached between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Yours sincerely,



Liam Herrick, Executive Director,
Irish Council for Civil Liberties



Brian Gormally, Director,
Committee on the Administration of Justice

Eilis Barry, Chief Executive, The Free Legal Advice Centres
Kevin Hanratty, Human Rights Consortium
Paddy Kelly, Director, Children's Law Centre
Patricia King, General Secretary, The Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Justin Kouame, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Tanya Ward, Chief Executive, Children's Rights Alliance
Seamus McAleavey, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Dr Anna Bryson, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
Michael Farrell, Solicitor
Colin Harvey, Professor of Human Rights Law, Queen's University Belfast
Dr Amanda Kramer, Research Fellow, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
Professor Siobhán Mullally, Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway
Rory O'Connell, Professor of Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Ulster University