

# Joint Committee on Human Rights

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From Andrew Dismore MP, Chair

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## ***Monitoring the Government's Response to Court Judgments Finding Breaches of Human Rights: *Hirst v United Kingdom****

Thank you for your letter dated 14 August 2007 enclosing the Government's response to my Committee's recommendations in its report on court judgments finding breaches of human rights.<sup>1</sup> I look forward to receiving your separate response to our broader recommendations on the mechanisms for the implementation of these judgments.

I note the Government's response to my Committee's recommendations on the implementation of the Grand Chamber's judgment in *Hirst v United Kingdom*.

In our Report, we indicated our view that the delay in implementation of the judgment in *Hirst v UK* was disproportionate. The timetable provided to us by Lord Falconer, in his letter dated 27 March 2007, envisaged that the consideration of responses to Phase 1 of the DCA Consultation on the Voting Rights of Convicted Prisoners would be completed between April – June 2007 and that the Phase 2 consultation document would be published in June 2007. This timetable left a question mark over whether or not the Government would be able to ensure that the reforming measures necessary would be in place by May 2008.

It is clear from your response that the timetable for implementation has shifted again and that the Government are currently considering their position. I would be grateful if you could:

- Provide us with an up to date timetable for the implementation of the judgment in *Hirst v UK*;
- Confirm that the Government intends to publish the responses received during Phase 1 of the consultation in full, in order to inform public and parliamentary debate; and

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<sup>1</sup> Sixteenth Report of Session 2006-07; HL Paper 128/HC 728

- Provide us with a copy of the proposed Phase 2 Consultation Document, in draft, if possible.

I would also be grateful if you could confirm that the Government are taking into account the declaration of incompatibility made by the Court of Session in *William Smith* and the judgment of the Grand Chamber in *Hirst v UK* when planning the timetable for the next election.

As expressed in our Report, my Committee would be disappointed if any general election were to proceed in the absence of reform to meet the incompatibility with the ECHR due to the blanket ban on prisoners' voting.

I would be grateful for your response by 4 October 2007.

Andrew Dismore MP  
*Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights*