# **The Paris Principles**

## Independent and representative institutions

NHRIs are accredited by reference to the UN Paris Principles to ensure their independence, pluralism, impartiality, accountability and effectiveness. NHRIs must be both formally and functionally independent of government and other stakeholders. They are representative of all aspects of society and cooperate with relevant actors to address any human rights issue arising.

The Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions ('the Paris Principles') were adopted by the UN General Assembly

in 1993. Since that time, the UN calls for every state to establish a NHRI that is compliant with the Paris Principles.

# The Paris Principles set out the minimum standards required by NHRIs to be independent and effective:

- Establishment under primary law or the Constitution
- ✓ A broad mandate to promote and protect human rights
- Formal and functional independence
- Pluralism, representing all aspects of society
- Adequate resources and financial autonomy
- Freedom to address any human rights issue arising
- ✓ Annual reporting on the national human rights situation
- Cooperation with national and international actors

The following classifications are used for NHRI accreditation:

- A Compliant with the Paris Principles
- B Partially compliant with the Paris Principles

If NHRIs are accredited with 'A' status, they receive participation rights before various UN bodies, including the Human Rights Council.

European human rights mechanisms also rely increasingly on NHRIs to provide trusted, credible and legitimate information on the human rights situation on the ground.

# **Key Facts about NHRIs**

NHRIs address the full range of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. NHRIs' functions include:

- Monitoring and investigating the human rights situation on the ground, such as freedom of expression and assembly
- Reporting to international monitoring bodies such as the UN and Council of Europe
- Providing support for individuals to enforce their rights, through complaints handling or legal assistance
- Advising government, parliament and other public bodies to address core human rights concerns, as well as to eradicate all forms of discrimination
- Ensuring the compliance of national laws and practices with all international human rights norms, including UN Treaties, the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

# NHRIs as a bridge

# A bridge between civil society and the state

As state-mandated bodies, independent of government, NHRIs sit between the state and civil society. NHRIs cooperate with a variety of civil society actors, and bring an accurate overview of the human rights situation, with recommendations, to government, parliament and other state bodies.

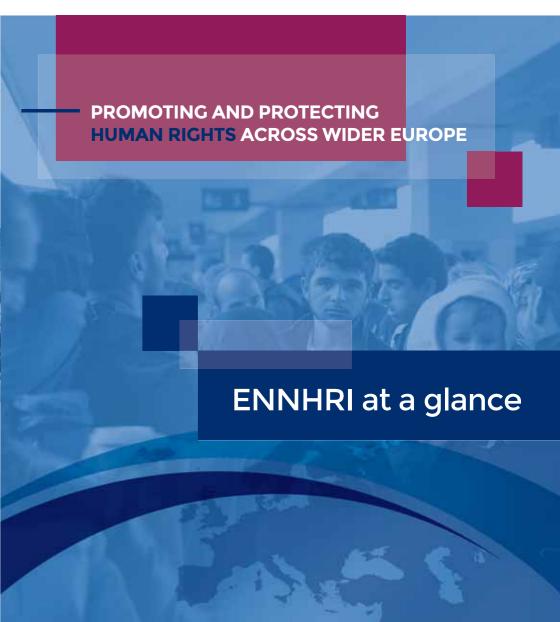
- Publishing research, recommendations and opinions
- Promoting a culture of rights, through training and awareness raising activities on a variety of issues, such as the right to adequate housing, health or education
- Supporting the work of human rights defenders to combat issues such as torture, arbitrary detention, and human trafficking
- Cooperating with NGOs, civil society, networks and regional bodies



# A bridge between the national and international arena

NHRIs all apply international human rights standards on the national level, with a full understanding of the local context. At the same time, they report to international and regional human rights mechanisms a true picture of the human rights situation on the ground.





## **ENNHRI and NHRIs**

ENNHRI is the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. ENNHRI's goal is to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights across the Europe region.

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are independent bodies with a constitutional or legal mandate to promote and protect human rights. They are a key element of a strong and effective national, regional and global human rights framework. ENNHRI supports European NHRIs to be effective on the national level and to promote and protect human rights across wider Europe.

### ENNHRI supports the development of European NHRIs by:

- Advising on the establishment and accreditation of NHRIs
- Coordinating the exchange of information and good practice between members
- Organising capacity building and training on NHRI methodologies and human rights, such as at the annual NHRI Academy
- ✓ Building solidarity between European NHRIs
- ✓ Providing support for NHRIs under threat
- Facilitating NHRIs' engagement with regional and international mechanisms

### **ENNHRI** promotes human rights across Europe

NHRIs each have expertise on the national human rights situation in their respective states. ENNHRI brings together NHRIs to work on a wide range of human rights issues affecting Europe, such as:

- European structures to support human rights
- Human rights of persons with disabilities
- Human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- Human rights of older persons in long-term care
- Economic and social rights
- Counter-terrorism and human rights
- Business and human rights

## **How does ENNHRI work?**

ENNHRI has a membership of around 40 NHRIs from across wider Europe, including Ombuds Institutions, Human Rights Commissions and Institutes. Our members have a diversity of mandates and national contexts. They are committed to working together to promote and protect human rights across Europe.

## **Governance**

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the highest decision making body, and is made up of all ENNHRI members.

### EUROPEAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE (ECC)

The ECC is made up of six elected 'A' status member NHRIs. The ECC drives ENNHRI's strategic priorities, led by its Chair.

#### FINANCE COMMITTEE

ENNHRI's Finance Committee, led by its Chair, oversees ENNHRI's financial governance.

#### WORKING GROUPS

ENNHRI has several Working Groups with expertise in different thematic areas, such as: European legal structures, rights of persons with disabilities, and asylum and migration.

#### PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

ENNHRI's Secretariat was established in 2013 in Brussels. It supports and facilitates ENNHRI's work, and provides a central contact point for stakeholders.

## Global Alliance

ENNHRI is one of four regional networks of NHRIs, which together make up a Global Alliance. The Global Alliance of NHRIs meets once a year in Geneva, and the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as its Secretariat.

### **Partners**

ENNHRI is recognised and has participation rights before various regional human rights mechanisms. We also work closely with our regional partners, such as the Council of Europe, OSCE-ODIHR, the EU Agency on Fundamental Rights, the EU institutions, European offices of OHCHR and UNDP, Equinet and European civil society organisations.



Rue Royale 138 B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Email: info@ennhri.org Telephone: +32 (0) 2 212 31 75

Follow us on Twitter: @ennhri

**WWW.ENNHRI.ORG** 



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