

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
- 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



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.

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.



European Network of
National Human Rights Institutions

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING
HUMAN RIGHTS ACROSS WIDER EUROPE

ENNHRI at a glance

