Strategic Plan 2018-2021

In line with our strategic plan, our work focuses on three core objectives.

1. More European NHRIs in compliance with the UN Paris Principles

We advocate and provide support for the establishment of NHRIs in full compliance with the UN Paris Principles in European countries. We also provide support for NHRIs undergoing re-accreditation through practical advice, as well as tailored support for NHRIs facing threats to their compliance with the UN Paris Principles.

2. More effective promotion and protection of human rights in Europe

We help strengthen NHRIs to promote and protect human rights at the national level through capacity-building activities, engagement with European and international actors and raising the visibility of NHRIs. This includes a focus on the following themes, identified by our members as collective priorities:

- Asylum and migration
- Democracy and rule of law
- Economic and social rights

Other areas we work on include: Sustainable Development Goals, human rights in (post-)conflict, business and human rights, rights of persons with disabilities, rights of older persons and communicating human rights.

3. A strong and sustainable network

We facilitate engagement and communication within our membership and actively support the engagement of European NHRIs in initiatives of the Global Alliance of NHRIs. We also work to strengthen the governance, management and funding of our network.

Governance structure

- General Assembly: The General Assembly is our highest decision-making body. It is made up of all ENNHRI members.
- Board: The Board drives our strategic priorities, led by its Chair. It is made up of six elected ‘A’ status member NHRIs.
- Finance Committee: The Finance Committee oversees our financial governance, led by its Chair.
- Working Groups: We have several Working Groups through which cooperation among NHRIs around different thematic areas is facilitated.
- Permanent Secretariat: Our Secretariat is based in Brussels. It supports and facilitates our work and provides a central contact point for stakeholders.

ENNHRI at a glance

Promoting and protecting human rights across wider Europe

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What is ENNHRI?

ENNHRI is the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. We bring together over 40 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across Europe to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. Our network provides a platform for collaboration and solidarity in addressing human rights challenges and a common voice for NHRIs at the European level.

We work to:
- Strengthen NHRIs by facilitating the exchange of information and good practices and organising capacity-building activities
- Support NHRIs with their compliance with the UN Paris Principles in their establishment and accreditation and when they come under threat
- Connect NHRIs to European institutions by facilitating their engagement with regional mechanisms, raising their visibility and intervening on regional legal and policy developments

Vision
The universal and effective enjoyment of human rights throughout Europe

Mission
Promote and protect human rights through strengthening, supporting and connecting European NHRIs

Values
- Respect for international human rights standards
- Transparency
- Cooperation
- Accountability
- Non-discrimination and respect for diversity
- Participation
- Independence
- Solidarity

What are National Human Rights Institutions?

NHRIs are state-mandated bodies, independent of government, with a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights. They address the full range of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Their functions can include:
- Advising on the compliance of national laws and practices with all international human rights norms
- Advising government, parliament and other public bodies to address human rights concerns
- Providing support for individuals to enforce their rights through complaints handling, legal assistance or strategic litigation
- Promoting a culture of rights through training and awareness-raising activities
- Monitoring and investigating the human rights situation on the ground
- Reporting to international and regional bodies, such as the UN, Council of Europe, EU and OSCE
- Publishing research, recommendations and opinions
- Cooperating with NGOs, civil society, networks and regional bodies
- Supporting the work of Human Rights Defenders

NHRIs as bridges
Between civil society and the state: NHRIs cooperate with a variety of civil society actors to bring an accurate overview of the human rights situation, with recommendations, to government, parliament and other state bodies.

Between the national and international arenas: NHRIs apply international human rights standards at the national level with a full understanding of the local context. They also report to international and regional human rights mechanisms.

NHRIs as 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.

Since the adoption of the UN Paris Principles by the UN General Assembly in 1993, the UN, Council of Europe and EU have called on every state to establish an NHRI that is compliant with the UN Paris Principles.

UN Paris Principles
- Establishment by 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, including civil society

NHRIs are accredited by the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation with the following classifications:

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

NHRIs with ‘A’ status receive participation rights before various UN bodies, including the Human Rights Council. European human rights mechanisms also increasingly rely on NHRIs to provide trusted, credible and legitimate information on the human rights situation on the ground.

* Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (UNGA Res. 48/134, 1993)