

ENNHRI Annual Conference 2020

'Building Better Together Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law in Europe: Recognising the Role of NHRIs'

Wednesday 2 December 2020 – online

Objectives

The ENNHRI Annual Conference will bring together European NHRIs with policy-makers, leaders of European and international organisations, and civil society to:

- Raise awareness about how NHRIs enhance respect of human rights, democracy and rule of law, including through formal cooperation with regional mechanisms;
- Inspire further NHRI strategic approaches and partnerships for positive impacts from European policies on human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe;

Context

The autumn of 2020 constitutes a milestone moment for European human rights actors to consider how to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe, including through a range of newly adopted European policy documents. These encompass the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024), the new EU Strategy for implementing the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Action Plan on Democracy, strengthened European instruments to tackle rule of law challenges, and instruments proposed to tackle COVID-19 impacts.

The recently-published [FRA report on NHRIs](#) calls for 'independent, effective and impactful' Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs in all EU Member States, and shows the value for the EU to engage with NHRIs to 'gain credible insight into realities on the ground, as well as human rights expertise on EU policies and laws'. Start 2021, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe is expected to adopt its [updated Recommendation on 'the development and strengthening of effective, pluralistic and independent NHRIs'](#).

Throughout 2020, ENNHRI has contributed to varied processes leading to the adoption of new & strengthened European policy documents.¹ ENNHRI contributions have highlighted the potential role of NHRIs and the need for new European policies to develop synergies and complementary approaches with pre-existing instruments, for the better realisation of human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe. Responding to emerging challenges and feeding into European & international processes in 2020, ENNHRI also set up a common reporting for [NHRIs on the rule of law](#), identifying country-specific issues and key trends across the region, with specific attention for the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approach

The Conference will consist of a public interactive debate amongst NHRIs, European policy-makers, leaders of European and international organisations and civil society. The Conference will include a keynote speech and two high-level panel debates, moderated by NHRI leaders. Other NHRIs will be invited to take the floor to complement panel debates in some instances. There will be input & interaction with the wider audience throughout the meeting through polls and chatbox questions. At the end of each panel there is some time foreseen for open Q&A.

¹ ENNHRI submissions on EU rule of law monitoring [here](#) (EU Member States) and [here](#) (EU enlargement package), ENNHRI submission on new strategy on implementation of EU Charter of Fundamental Rights [here](#), ENNHRI submission on European Democracy Action Plan [here](#), ENNHRI joint submission on EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024) [here](#); ENNHRI submission on CoE updated Recommendation on NHRIs [here](#).

Draft Agenda

Time	Session	Speakers
9.30-9.35	Introduction	Caroline Fennell, ENNHRI Chair
9.35-9.45	Presentation of NHRI & policy recommendations	Katrien Meuwissen, Senior Human Rights Officer, ENNHRI
9.45-10.00	Keynote Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andreas Peschke, Director-General for European Affairs, German Foreign Office
10.00-11.10	High-Level Panel 1 <u>Moderator:</u> Beate Rudolf, Director of the German Institute for Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joachim Herrmann, Member of Cabinet Commissioner Reynders • Birgit Van Hout, Regional Representative for Europe, UN Human Rights (OHCHR) • Nils Muižnieks, Amnesty International Regional Director for Europe • Luisa Ragher, European External Action Service, Head of Division Human Rights Response by: NHRI Heads of Institution Q&A with wider audience
11.10-11.20	Break	
11.20-12.20	High-level Panel 2 <u>Moderator:</u> Lora Vidović, Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael O'Flaherty, Director EU Fundamental Rights Agency • Christophe Poirel, Director of Human Rights, Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe • Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director of OSCE ODIHR Response by: NHRI Heads of Institution Q&A with wider audience
12.20-12.30	Closing remarks	Debbie Kohner, ENNHRI Secretary -General

