

# ENNHRI's Leadership Webinar

Monday 9 November 2020 – online

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## Creating Impacts from EU Internal Policy on rule of law, human rights and democracy - the Role of and Support for NHRIs

### Objectives

- Raise awareness about recent developments in the EU 'internal' policy on promoting and protecting rule of law, human rights and democracy;
- Inspire further NHRI strategic approaches to create impacts for rule of law, human rights and democracy from European policy instruments, in partnership with European actors;
- Consider opportunities and ways for EU actors to support the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles;
- Provide a space for NHRI Heads of Institution to exchange on challenges and opportunities for EU strategic engagement by NHRIs.

### Context

The autumn of 2020 marks a milestone moment for European human rights actors to consider how to strengthen the promotion and protection of rule of law, human rights and democracy in Europe, building on the progress made by the different EU actors on a range of new policy initiatives.

These initiatives encompass a multitude of instruments meant to address challenges facing rule of law, human rights and democracy in the EU 'internally', including: the newly established annual Rule of Law Review Cycle, which has led to the adoption of the first ever report of the European Commission on the Rule of Law in the EU, the forthcoming revised Strategy on the effective implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the forthcoming European Action Plan on Democracy, and the European Parliament's initiative to establish an EU Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights.

Given their unique standing and legal mandate, NHRIs are a key component of the success of these policy initiatives in driving progress on the ground on rule of law, human rights and

democracy. They are integral part of the institutional architecture that serves to realise these values in each country; and their engagement is a crucial contribution to the identification of challenges and appropriate responses at EU and national level. This clearly stands out in the recently-published [FRA report on NHRIs](#). The report calls for ‘independent, effective and impactful’ Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs in all EU Member States as a vital part of the country-level human rights protection system, 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’.

Throughout 2020, ENNHRI has fed into the definition and implementation of these key European policy initiatives<sup>1</sup>. ENNHRI contributions have highlighted the potential role of NHRIs and the need for enhanced synergies and complementary approaches among new and pre-existing instruments, for the better realisation of human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe. 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.

The European Commission’s first annual report on the rule of law states that NHRIs “play an important role as rule of law safeguard and can provide an independent check on the system in a rule of law crisis”. Similarly, the European Parliament’s resolution on the Establishment of an EU Mechanism on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights calls for NHRIs’ involvement in the different stages of the EU’s mechanism and stresses that an independent NHRI in compliance with the UN Paris Principles can also serve as an indicator of respect for democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in EU Member States.

## Approach

The Webinar will facilitate an open discussion amongst NHRI Heads of Institutions and representatives from FRA, the European Commission and the European Parliament, on how to seize opportunities offered by European ‘internal’ policy initiatives, through strategic engagement with NHRIs and strengthened cooperation with and support from European actors. Presentations by EU actors will serve to trigger an open discussion with Heads of NHRIs. Synergies across the variety of European policies teasing out priorities and NHRI advocacy messages, will be

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<sup>1</sup> ENNHRI submissions on EU rule of law monitoring [here](#) (EU Member States), ENNHRI submission on new strategy on implementation of EU Charter of Fundamental Rights [here](#), ENNHRI submission on European Democracy Action Plan [here](#).

considered. A background paper will be prepared by the ENNHRI Secretariat, in consultation with members and European policy-makers, to inform and guide discussions.

The main conclusions from the event will serve to feed into discussions on Tuesday 10 November 2020. This second webinar will bring together high-level speakers to discuss the role of and support for NHRIs in the context of EU 'external' policy initiatives, aimed at promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in non-EU countries.

## Draft Agenda

Time	Session
9.00 – 9.15	Registration
9.15 - 9.30	Introduction and welcome
9.30-10.00	<p>NHRIs as part of the rule of law, human rights and democracy protection system and the value added of closer engagement with the EU</p> <p><i>Heads of NHRIs' exchange with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU FRA: Andreas Accardo, Eva Sobotka, Jonas Grimheden</li> </ul>
<b>10.00-10.10</b>	<b>Break</b>
10.10-11.05	<p>EU initiatives on Rule of Law, Democracy and Fundamental Rights in the EU: role of and support for NHRIs</p> <p><i>Heads of NHRIs' exchange with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emmanuel Crabit</b>, European Commission, DG JUST, Director Fundamental Rights and Rule of Law</li> <li>• <b>Michal Šimečka</b> Member of European Parliament, rapporteur on the legislative initiative to establish an EU Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights</li> </ul>
<b>11.05-11.10</b>	<b>Break</b>
11.10-11.30	<p>Conclusions: Towards more Strategic NHRI engagement with the EU for rule of law, human rights and democracy in the EU</p> <p><i>Heads of NHRIs' discussion</i></p>