

High-Level Meeting

Council of Europe Committee of Ministers 'Recommendation on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions'

26 – 27 April 2021 – online

Objectives

The high-level meeting will bring together heads of European NHRIs, Council of Europe (CoE) key actors and the wider public with a view to:

- Disseminate the newly adopted CoE 'Recommendation on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions';
- Identify strategic priorities, challenges, cooperation and support in follow-up of the Recommendation;
- Explore ways of developing:
 - a stronger role for the CoE at the national level in cooperation and support of NHRIs;
 - a stronger role and meaningful participation of NHRIs and ENNHRI in the Council of Europe for the enhanced promotion and protection of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

Context

The adoption by the CoE Committee of Ministers of the 'Recommendation on the development and strengthening of effective, pluralist and independent national human rights institutions' represents a milestone for further embedding NHRIs' central role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Europe, including through effective cooperation with the Council of Europe.

ENNHRI, as observer to the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), strongly engaged on the revision of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on NHRIs. ENNHRI [convened](#) a high-level meeting in February 2020 which brought together the leadership

of 19 European NHRIs, CoE actors and other stakeholders to discuss how the Recommendation can make a difference to the work of NHRIs, both at a national level and for engagement with the CoE. As a follow up to the meeting, ENNHRI made a [submission](#) to the CDDH-INST Drafting Group identifying key elements for inclusion in the revised version.

The [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2021\)1](#) was finally adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 31 April 2021. The Recommendation acknowledges the role of NHRIs as pillars of the rule of law, human rights and democracy in Europe and recommends each Council of Europe Member State to establish, maintain and strengthen an independent NHRI in compliance with the Paris Principles and to ensure an enabling environment for, and cooperate with NHRIs.

Approach

The high-level meeting will take place on 26-27 April 2021, after the adoption of the Recommendation on NHRIs by the Committee of Ministers.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the high-level meeting will be organised in an online format. The meeting will consist of two parts; a public high-level meeting with key CoE actors and NHRI heads, followed by an internal meeting amongst heads of NHRIs to identify strategic follow-up of the meeting individually and through ENNHRI.

The high-level public meeting (day 1) will consist of key addresses from Council of Europe actors and NHRI heads, focusing on avenues to further strengthen cooperation and support between the CoE and NHRIs at national level, and for meaningful participation of NHRIs and ENNHRI in the CoE, in follow-up of the adopted Recommendation. The public meeting will include interactive methods to facilitate discussion. Taking into account the discussions and outcomes of day 1, NHRI heads will reconvene for an internal meeting on day 2, to identify strategic priorities for NHRIs and ENNHRI in follow-up of the Recommendation, and to forge closer cooperation with the Council of Europe, for the better promotion and protection of human rights across the region.

Agenda

Monday 26 April 2021 – Public High-Level Meeting		
Time (CET)	Session	Speakers
10.00-10.05	Welcome	Caroline Fennell , ENNHRI Chair; Commissioner at Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
10.05-10.15	NHRI Recommendation's Added Value and Potential	Krista Oinonen , Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland; Chair of CDDH Drafting Group on Civil Society and National Human Rights Institutions
10.15-11.50	<p>From CoE Intergovernmental Processes to national implementation - cooperation with & support for NHRIs</p> <p>Moderator: Michael Windfuhr, Deputy Director of the German Institute for Human Rights</p>	<p>Keynote speech by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bärbel Kofler, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance, German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe <p>Moderated roundtable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lord Richard Balfe, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Former rapporteur on PACE Resolution 2301 (2019) Christophe Poirel, Director of Human Rights of the Council of Europe Antoine Buyse, Director of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM); Member of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe Bärbel Kofler, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance, German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe <p>Response by: NHRI Heads of Institution Q&A with wider audience</p>
11.50-12.00	Break	
12.00-13.15	From CoE Independent Oversight to national implementation -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Spano, President of the European Court of Human Rights (<i>video message</i>) <p>Moderated roundtable:</p>

	<p>cooperation with & support for NHRIs</p> <p>Moderator: Erinda Ballanca, People's Advocate of Albania</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe • Iulia Antoanella Motoc, Judge at the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Romania • Karin Lukas, President of the European Committee of Social Rights, Council of Europe • Veronika Bílková, Member of the Bureau of the Venice Commission, Council of Europe <p>Response by: NHRI Heads of Institution Q&A with wider audience</p>
13.15-13.30	Closing Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigrid Jacoby, Representative of the German Federal Government for Matters Relating to Human Rights • Debbie Kohner, ENNHRI Secretary-General

Tuesday 27 April 2021 – Internal Strategic Meeting*		
Time (CET)	Session	Speakers
9.30	Introduction	Chair/Secretariat
9.30-10.15	Strategic opportunities at CoE mechanisms for NHRIs	Chair/Secretariat
10.15-10.30	Break	
10.30-11.15	Strategic opportunities at national level for NHRIs	Chair/Secretariat
11.15-11.30	Wrap-Up	Debbie Kohner , ENNHRI Secretary-General

** for ENNHRI members only*

