

## Statement on the need to ensure adequate resources for a future Swiss NHRI

---

The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) welcomes the [decision](#) of the Swiss Parliament to establish an institution with a view to accreditation as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in line with the UN Paris Principles. We appreciate the commitment by national authorities for the new institution to strive for A-status accreditation and the recognition that this could contribute to strengthening the protection and promotion of human rights in Switzerland. The new institution will initiate its operations in 2023.

At the same time, ENNHRI acknowledges the [concerns raised](#) by civil society and the [recommendations](#) of international stakeholders regarding the adequacy of the proposed allocation of financial resources for the future Swiss NHRI.

In view of the upcoming parliamentary decision on the resources and budget to be allocated to the new Swiss institution, ENNHRI is taking the opportunity to highlight the importance of ensuring adequate funding in order to safeguard the independent and effective functioning of a newly established NHRI.

### Compliance with international and regional standards

The requirement to ensure that NHRIs are provided with adequate funding and resources is well-rooted in international and regional standards. The [UN Paris Principles](#) are the standards applicable to NHRIs and the basis upon which the Sub-Committee on Accreditation ([SCA](#)) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has developed [General Observations](#), which provide further guidance on the content and scope of requirements for the independent and effective functioning of NHRIs. According to these standards:

- NHRIs must be provided with an appropriate level of funding to guarantee their independence and ability to freely determine their priorities and activities.
- The allocation of funding to NHRIs must be based on objective criteria and must not be in detriment to the NHRI's ability to carry out its work effectively and independently.
- The provision of adequate funding by the state should, as a minimum, include the allocation of funds for accessible premises, staff salaries and benefits that are comparable to those of civil servants performing similar tasks in other independent institutions, and sufficient resources for the NHRI to perform all its mandated activities.

- Adequate funding should, to a reasonable degree, ensure the gradual and progressive realisation of the improvement of the NHRI's operations and the fulfilment of its mandate.

Most recently, the requirement for and significance of adequate resources has been reaffirmed by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in its [Recommendation 2021\(1\)](#), which stresses that "States should provide NHRIs with adequate, sufficient, and sustainable resources to allow them to carry out their mandate, including to engage with all relevant stakeholders in a fully independent manner and freely determine their priorities and activities".

In comparison with the pilot project (the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights), the competences and mandate of the new Swiss institution will be significantly expanded, and the institution will need more resources to perform the full breadth of its mandate and ensure it is accessible to the wider community. A continuation of the same or similar funding as was afforded to the pilot project would limit the ability of the institution to function in line with the UN Paris Principles.

### **Moving ahead**

Independent and effective NHRIs in compliance with international standards are crucial for promoting and protecting human rights at the national level. In considering the allocation of resources envisaged for the new Swiss institution, we call on the national parliament and other relevant authorities to commit adequate resources that will allow the institution to independently and effectively fulfil its mandate. In addition, we encourage parliamentarians to constructively consult the findings of civil society organisations and other experts in determining an adequate budget for the institution.

ENNHRI remains available to provide further information on the applicable standards and to support the establishment and functioning of a future Swiss NHRI in line with the UN Paris Principles.

## About

ENNHRI, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, brings together over 40 NHRIs across Europe to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. ENNHRI supports the establishment of NHRIs in Europe in compliance with the UN Paris Principles, including by providing advice to state authorities on the role, function, and value of NHRIs.

