

ENNHRI Operational Plan 2023

Adopted by the ENNHRI General
Assembly in November 2022



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Introduction

In 2023, ENNHRI is operating in a context of increasing regression on human rights and rule of law across Europe. Regional and international human rights frameworks are challenged, and the rule of law has been weakened. The impacts of the COVID pandemic have left a socio-economic climate that places pressure on human rights. This has been exacerbated by the devastating war against Ukraine, which has led to serious human rights abuses in Ukraine; and severe increases in cost of living, national security concerns, and increased migration across the region.

ENNHRI's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025 is well equipped to adapt to these challenges, while remaining focussed on our key mission to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights, through supporting, strengthening and connecting NHRIs. Therefore, in this **ENNHRI 10th anniversary year**, ENNHRI will build on its progress to reinforce the strengths of European NHRIs and the network to face the challenges ahead.

Overview

ENNHRI will continue to prioritise **more and stronger NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles**, with further participation by members in peer support through an Expert Group on Standards. ENNHRI will engage with states without an NHRI to seek establishment and first-time accreditation. In addition, all NHRIs under (re)accreditation review will receive tailored support through the process and ENNHRI will actively input to developing the SCA accreditation process.

As well as reactive support to NHRIs under threat, and particularly in Ukraine, ENNHRI will work to strengthen regional protection mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders, including NHRIs. We will also research a more frequent threat to NHRIs, to prepare NHRIs and ENNHRI for rapid and impactful action. At the same time, ENNHRI will work on NHRI resilience and the prevention of threats, through the implementation of regional standards on NHRIs. This will include: the publication of a baseline on the implementation of the Council of Europe; awareness raising materials on Paris Principles and regional standards; and follow-up to ODIHR's project on NHRI Resilience.

ENNHRI's work to **enhance the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and rule of law** will focus on two thematic priorities: the human rights impacts of the war against Ukraine; and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The annual NHRI Academy, co-hosted with ODIHR, will

focus on a human rights aspect of the war against Ukraine. ENNHRI's work on migration will continue with specific attention to the impacts of AI, and all of ENNHRI's Working and Core Groups will meet in September 2023 to consider NHRI work on AI and human rights, each through the lens of their Working Group focus.

ENNHRI will continue its annual Rule of Law reporting through an updated methodology to increase the impacts on human rights, democracy, and rule of law across Europe. Work towards the implementation of key regional conventions will focus on engagement with regional Courts, including execution of judgments and third-party interventions. A Leadership Forum will take place to support and connect NHRI leaders, and a related Leaders Programme will be developed to provide induction, (peer) mentoring, exit interviews and alumni support.

In order to achieve a **stronger and more sustainable network**, ENNHRI will develop its member engagement activities, and strengthen governance transparency through a review of knowledge management and more frequent updates to members. ENNHRI's membership will consider statute revision, following 10 years of operations. In this anniversary year, ENNHRI will also celebrate impacts, and consider actions required to address challenges ahead. Strategic fundraising will continue to fund the ENNHRI's core prioritised work, as set out by its Strategic Plan and membership.

Core Objective 1: More and stronger NHRIs in compliance with the UN Paris Principles

ENNHRI's members have underlined the primary importance of this Core Objective. In 2023, ENNHRI will **integrate further the voices and experiences of NHRIs** in this area of work. By building on the new guidelines on support to NHRIs under threat and the revised Expert Group on NHRI Standards, ENNHRI will add a structured and strategic approach to its work in understanding the challenges and good practices of NHRIs' unique mandate with reference to international and regional standards.

ENNHRI will take an important step in this direction with the publication of the baseline **study on implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on NHRIs**, which will provide unprecedented and extensive information on many aspects of European NHRIs' work in practice, with reference to regional and international standards. The study will serve as a basis for our better understanding of aspects on which our members may need further support and contribute to **strategic engagement at the regional and national levels on NHRI standards**.

We will also step up our advocacy towards the establishment of strengthening of NHRIs in specific countries, by engaging and raising the awareness of national authorities on NHRI's standards, mandate, and crucial role. Due to the urgent circumstances in country, ENNHRI will pay particular regard to the **situation and needs of the Ukrainian NHRI** in implementing its mandate in light of relevant standards.

ENNHRI will increase its engagement with the European Union and the Council of Europe in relation to NHRI standards. We will develop a position paper on EU Standards on NHRIs, which will serve as a basis for continued advocacy in this regard. ENNHRI will also advocate for stronger regional protection mechanisms for HRDs, including NHRIs, in cooperation with CSO and HRDs at the EU and CoE.

Moreover, we will continue to act as the reference organization on and for NHRIs in Europe, providing tailored support to our members, for instance when they are undergoing (re)accreditation, facing threats, or seeking to strengthen their work.

ENNHRI will observe the SCA sessions in 2023 and contribute to the strengthening of the accreditation process, participating in SCA retreats and discussions for revisions of accreditation standards and practices. We will continue to encourage and support initiatives towards the establishment of NHRIs in countries where they do not exist yet, and work with members seeking first-time accreditation, A-status, or implementation of the SCA recommendations.

Core Objective 2: More effective promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law

In 2023, ENNHRI will prioritise capacity-building of NHRIs and regional engagement in two areas: tackling human rights impacts from the war in Ukraine and artificial intelligence. For the first time, and in the context of ENNHRI's 10-year anniversary, all ENNHRI member groupings will be brought together to exchange practices and potential future action on artificial intelligence and human rights, and its interaction with the various thematic and functional areas of focus of each group. The NHRI Academy, during its 10th anniversary edition, will be dedicated to aspects of the human rights challenges from the war in Ukraine, while ENNHRI's migration experts will meet in-person and lead ENNHRI's advocacy in this area.

The outcomes of peer exchange and joint working by NHRI staff on these topics throughout 2023 will be brought to NHRI leaders at their General Assembly meeting and Leadership Forum in November 2023. A Leadership Programme will also be developed, including induction, mentoring and development activities for NHRI leaders, which will reinforce peer support and support their important role to lead on human rights in each European state, and in challenging contexts.

ENNHRI will continue to prioritise work on supporting an impactful European human rights, democracy and rule of law infrastructure, including through joint annual reporting and advocacy in support of strong regional mechanisms which can better enable implementation of rights.

Activities on implementation of regional human rights Conventions (ECHR and EU Charter) will be organized, with specific attention for advancing NHRIs' engagement with the regional Courts (European Court of Human Rights and EU Court of Justice). ENNHRI's Regional Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders will be reviewed.

Following ENNHRI's new strategic plan, policies and guidance for ENNHRI's member groupings will be reviewed and updated while ENNHRI's approach to capacity-building will be further refined, including the possibility for members to apply for small grants to carry out national projects in follow-up of network activities.

Core objective 3: Stronger and more sustainable Network

ENNHRI's 10th anniversary in 2023 is a good moment for the network to take stock, celebrate achievements and look forward to the future. Various visibility activities will be undertaken throughout the year, and a celebration event organised in the autumn to consider key impacts and actions required for resilience.

Transparency and accountability of the governance bodies will be increased, with regular updates from Board and Finance Committee Chairs. The ENNHRI Hub will continue to be used for data collection and information sharing between members. And a review of the ENNHRI statutes will be undertaken, to address technical changes, and also for the membership to consider if ENNHRI's governance structures should be updated for a developed network ten years from establishment.

Following online meetings during the COVID pandemic, ENNHRI will return to an in-person General Assembly meeting on the occasion of the GANHRI annual meeting (March), including a side event to mark its impacts over ten years. Increased exchanges will take place with GANHRI and the other NHRI regional networks on coordination in topics such as accreditation, NHRIs under threat and HRDs, communications and emerging human rights concerns.

It will also be a year to consolidate policies and approaches, agreed after adoption of the new ENNHRI Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025. Notably the engagement with members will be strengthened, through more frequent member liaison. At the same time, a gender action plan will be implemented, to strengthen this dimension of the organisation and network. A new M&E

framework will be in place and members once again invited to reflect on progress made to achieving our strategic objectives.

Financial sustainability has been a cause of concern in recent years, and although for 2023 the budget will balance, for the future considerable fundraising will be needed to continue the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Fundraising will follow the priorities set by governance bodies, and include a members meeting to consider joint actions. 2023 will also see the launch of the ENNHRI regranting programme, where members can apply for funding to explore national or regional initiatives in priority areas such as rule of law, migration, artificial intelligence and share learnings across the network.

Annex: Key activities by Strategic Priority

Core Objective One: More and stronger NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles

1. New NHRIs are established in compliance with the UN Paris Principles

Review and implement Action Plan on NHRI establishment, in liaison with the Board

Strategic engagement and advice at the national level on NHRI establishment, as follow-up to study on Council of Europe Recommendation.

2. NHRIs are supported through a robust (re-)accreditation process

Tailored support to members undergoing (re)accreditation.

Participating at SCA Retreats and Sessions.

Development of materials for strengthening the SCA process.

3. Regional standards on NHRIs are strengthened and implemented

Baseline study on implementation of Council of Europe Recommendation on NHRIs published, presented as an online resource, and launched at Committee of Ministers.

Development of prioritised action plan for implementation of Recommendation on NHRIs.

Draft materials for national actors on NHRI standards.

Develop strategic paper on EU standards on NHRIs.

4. NHRIs facing challenges or threats are supported in countering them effectively

Tailored and timely support to NHRIs under threat, in line with the new ENNHRI guidelines, with particular attention paid to supporting the Ukrainian NHRI in fulfilling its mandate.

Analysis of at least one common threat against European NHRIs

Meeting of Contact Group of regional partners to support NHRIs, and release of common guidelines

Advocacy on stronger regional HRD protection mechanisms (including NHRIs), in cooperation with CSOs

Core Objective Two: Enhance the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and rule of law

5. NHRI capacity to promote and protect human rights in Europe is strengthened

10-year anniversary in-person ENNHRI member grouping meeting on artificial intelligence and human rights

NHRI Academy, in cooperation with ODIHR

Leadership Forum and Leaders Programme

NHRI seminar on the Charter and EU monitoring and enforcement mechanisms

6. NHRI participation rights in regional mechanisms are strengthened and broadened

Strategic advocacy with regional actors on NHRIs' added value, including in context of CoE high-level reflection group

Analysis and proposals for NHRIs on engagement with CJEU

Analysis of NHRIs' participation to CoE mechanisms and development of related advocacy priorities

7. NHRIs and ENNHRI contribute effectively to regional mechanisms

Annual common reporting on human rights and rule of law, and related submissions (such as on execution of ECtHR judgments)

Facilitation and dissemination of ENNHRI common positions on human rights, democracy and rule of law and Third-Party Interventions before European Court of Human Rights

Facilitation and representation of ENNHRI at EU and Council of Europe procedures, prioritising Artificial Intelligence, migration, Media Freedom, environment, and human rights in times of crisis

Core Objective Three: Strong and Sustainable Network

8. ENNHRI is a vibrant and accountable network led by its members

Frequent governance meetings, with updates from Board and Finance Committee

Review of ENNHRI statutes

10-year anniversary event –impacts and proposals for resilient network in future

Development of tools to apply learning from Result Oriented Monitoring

Diversity and inclusion audit, and implementation of gender action plan

9. ENNHRI is a well-managed network

New messaging strategy and development of network as multiplier for communications

Implementation of developed knowledge management systems across the network

Implementation of structural wellbeing processes

Development of new financial processes

10. ENNHRI is a financially sustainable network

Strategic funding applications in line with member priorities

Enhancing relations with existing and potential donors

Implementation of new grant management system