

Implementing the Council of Europe's Recommendation on National Human Rights Institutions: the state of play

The gold standard for effective, pluralist and independent NHRIs

March 2021 marked a milestone: the Committee of Ministers passed its Recommendation ([CM 2021/1](#)) on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). This affirms European NHRIs and their regional network, ENNHRI, as pillars for promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and rule of law. It is the European benchmark for effective, pluralist and independent NHRIs, while complementing the global standards of the [UN Paris Principles](#).

ENNHRI's baseline study: examining implementation of the Recommendation

ENNHRI's baseline study features country-specific analyses with good practices and recommendations for each Council of Europe Member State, alongside cross-regional findings.

In order to ensure the study's rigour and reliability, findings are gathered from three sources: the reports of NHRIs; reports of the [Sub-Committee on Accreditation](#) (SCA) of the Global Alliance of NHRIs; and information from Council of Europe independent bodies.

Seizing the moment to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Taking forward and applying the outcomes of the recent Fourth Summit will enable the Council of Europe to reinforce its core mission: to uphold human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe. NHRIs and ENNHRI have a crucial role to play in achieving this: the Recommendation offers the blueprint to ensuring they can do so.

We encourage you to follow up on the baseline's findings at national and Council of Europe level and seize the momentum to strengthen NHRIs, and with it human rights, democracy and rule of law within your Member States.

Find the **key findings** from the report on the next page. The [full baseline study](#) is also available for you to explore.

What is going well?



There is an **ever-growing family of NHRIs** across the Council of Europe's 46 Member States. A-status accredited NHRIs exist in 28 Member States, while 12 Member States have an institution taking steps towards A-status accreditation.



Authorities **have overall good awareness** of NHRIs, and generally provide them with adequate access to information, policymakers and legislators.



NHRIs have **strong mandates to contribute to justice systems**, including through awareness raising, individual complaints handling, strategic litigation, and third-party interventions before courts.

What can be improved?



Implementing transparent, merit-based and pluralistic selection and appointment processes for NHRI leadership. Crucial for NHRIs' independence and effectiveness, this applies in most Member States.



Ensuring adequate resources for NHRIs to carry out their full mandate and **allocating additional resources** for any further mandates given, with budgets allocated through **independent budget lines**.



Ensuring effective, timely and reasoned follow-up of NHRI recommendations by developing appropriate regulations and processes.

Advancing support for and meaningful engagement of NHRIs at the Council of Europe



With good practices and challenges appearing across all Member States, there is scope to set up a **comprehensive Council of Europe cooperation programme in support of NHRIs**, including in-country support, peer learning and twinning projects.



NHRIs engage with at least 13 Council of Europe bodies, and there is substantial scope to **improve engagement and NHRIs' and ENNHRI's participation rights**. **Continuous and dedicated support for NHRIs** at the Council of Europe's Secretariat (DG I) would be an important step to enable this.