

Operational Plan 2024

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Introduction

In 2024, ENNHRI will build on its actions to strengthen, connect and support NHRIs for enhanced promotion and protection of human rights across Europe. We will continue to focus on our core mission, while remaining responsive to contextual realities.

European NHRIs are operating in an environment of continued backsliding on human rights and rule of law. Challenges continue relating to the devastating war against Ukraine, micro and macro budgetary pressures, decreasing democratic space, climate disasters, divided societies, and the unregulated developments of Artificial Intelligence. NHRIs' broad mandates equip them to face the human rights implications of these challenges, but they also face attacks, limited resources and some lack of cooperation by state actors.

ENNHRI's activities in 2024 will support NHRIs to be effective in their crucial mandate. We will prioritise the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs, including in fragile contexts. We will build on the political momentum from the Council of Europe fourth Summit, and we will grasp the opportunity of new EU mandates to increase the recognition of and engagement with NHRIs. We will build capacity through peer exchange for NHRI leadership and staff, building solidarity across Europe. We will strengthen our network for resilience and sustainability in the next year and beyond.

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

In 2024, ENNHRI will build on its baseline study on the implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation on NHRIs to focus resources where most needed to support the establishment, accreditation and strengthening of NHRIs across Europe. The **Expert Group on Standards** will provide peer support across this strategic priority, facilitated and complemented by dedicated resources at the Secretariat.

ENNHRI will follow-up on the positive developments towards new NHRIs in Czech Republic and Iceland, as well as ongoing advocacy towards the remaining European states where an NHRI is not yet in place. ENNHRI Secretariat will also provide tailored support to all European NHRIs undergoing accreditation review in 2024, and facilitate advice on follow-up to SCA recommendations. Updated **information on the accreditation process for civil society and ENNHRI's support for members** will be developed. The new SCA member for the European

member will be inducted, and ENNHRI will continue to participate in the SCA sessions and retreats, contributing to the strengthening of the accreditation process.

In order to support the national implementation of NHRI standards, ENNHRI will publish dedicated **awareness raising materials for national actors on the NHRI mandate and standards**. These can be adapted to each national context and are intended to strengthen understanding of, and thus respect for, the NHRI mandate and status in-country. ENNHRI will also build on its experience of capacity assessments and other institution building activities to explore modalities for a programme for peer review and support of NHRI capacities in Europe.

Given the strong solidarity offered by ENNHRI's members, ENNHRI will continue to offer particular support to the Ukrainian NHRI and the human rights impacts of the war of aggression, including through supporting some agreed recommendations of the 2023 Capacity Assessment. We will also develop the scoping paper on the **role of NHRIs in situations of international armed conflict**, through consultation and exchange between members. ENNHRI will continue its engagement with the European Union and the Council of Europe in relation to NHRI standards, in order to support the implementation of the UN Paris Principles and Council of Europe Recommendation on NHRIs, and take these into account in regional developments.

ENNHRI will coordinate the newly established Contact Group for NHRIs, made up of partners who can support NHRIs under threat. This will facilitate a prompt and coordinated response to any attacks on NHRI's independence. At the same time, we will analyse a frequently occurring threat, as identified by the Baseline Study, to clarify structural responses, effective support and prevention where possible. ENNHRI will also work towards building **stronger regional and national protection mechanisms for HRDs, including NHRIs**, strengthening our support for civic space across Europe.

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

ENNHRI recognises that NHRIs need strong leaders to be effective in their work to promote and protect human rights. We will continue to develop our Leadership Programme, including co-mentoring; exit interviews and induction on change of mandates, and an **in-person Leadership Forum**. The Leadership Forum will provide a safe space for NHRI leaders to exchange in confidence, both on the current human rights and rule of law context in Europe, as well as a competency framework, peer support and leadership development, all specifically designed for the heads of NHRIs.

The **NHRI Academy**, co-organised by ENNHRI and OSCE-ODIHR will provide a week-long residential training for senior staff of NHRIs, focused on the NHRI mandate and its application to a thematic topic chosen by ENNHRI's members. Specific trainings will also take place, as well as the ongoing peer exchange facilitated by ENNHRI's Working Groups.¹ This will be complemented by dedicated information sessions to inform and support participation of members in regional engagement activities.

In 2024, ENNHRI will prioritise capacity-building of NHRIs and regional engagement in two areas:

- **Artificial intelligence:** ENNHRI will build on its capacity building and regional engagement relating to artificial intelligence, drawing from the AI Co-Lab to integrate this work across ENNHRI's thematic work and NHRIs' mandates. We will continue to advocate for strong human rights protections at regional and national level, including in relation to the EU Artificial Intelligence Act and the Council of Europe Convention on AI, Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law.
- **Securitisation and Human Rights:** The building narrative on security will be addressed through dedicated work to bolster human rights protection and NHRI capacities in an increasingly tense and polarised Europe. Information will be collected from members, through our human rights and rule of law reporting, to understand the current impacts of security on human rights, and how NHRIs can respond.

ENNHRI will build upon the strong commitments of the heads of European states and governments in the Reykjavik Declaration to achieve more **meaningful engagement of NHRIs** and ENNHRI in the Council of Europe. This will include the development of further modalities for the implementation of judgments, and ongoing engagement with CDDH, including its Drafting Group on Human Rights and Environment. We will also clarify NHRIs' role and participation opportunities in the EU in the context of European Parliament elections and a new European Commission.

We will continue to refine our new methodology and follow-up for ENNHRI's **annual common rule of law and human rights reporting**. We will seize on the European Commission's extended reporting, and organise a showcasing of NHRIs in enlargement, accession and candidate countries. The focus for the 2024 Rule of Law reporting will be 'checks and balances', as well as implementation of court judgments, where NHRIs have been recognised as a key actor. The developed methodology will be showcased at the closing conference of the FRA project on NHRIs, supported by EEA & Norway Grants.

¹ ENNHRI has currently 9 working groups, on: asylum and migration; artificial intelligence; business and human rights; climate; communications; CRPD; ESR; legal; older persons.

ENNHRI's contributions to regional mechanisms will continue across thematic priorities and Working Group initiatives. On the national level, members will be supported to implement learnings from network activities through **small grants**. All members will benefit from these activities, as outcomes will be fed back into the network for broad and multiplied results.

Core objective 3: Stronger and more sustainable Network

ENNHRI's **governance will be strengthened** in 2024, through the implementation of statute changes, complemented by the development of internal rules for the network. The General Assembly, Board, and Finance Committee will meet to set strategic direction and review progress. The Working Group Chairs will also meet regularly to support synergies across our work, and feed into the review of ENNHRI's policy on Working Groups. This will also reinforce the efficiency and effectiveness of members' participation in ENNHRI's work through transparent and accountable processes.

In 2024, ENNHRI will **hold elections for a new mandate** of its Board members, Chair, Finance Committee members and GANHRI governance positions, each with mandates to begin in March 2025. ENNHRI will also nominate a GANHRI Secretary, who will be presented to GANHRI's General Assembly for election in spring 2025 to deputise for the GANHRI Chair during a three year mandate.

ENNHRI's internal and external **communications** will be developed, including a review of the ENNHRI Hub, and an updating of the website. The Communications Working Group will seize opportunities to multiply the visibility of ENNHRI's and its members' work, thus strengthening impacts across Europe.

Similarly, ENNHRI's data management will be developed in order to ensure the accessibility of ENNHRI's outputs to its members and more broadly, as well as **efficient Secretariat practices**. The Secretariat staff will receive professional development, and also enhance their knowledge of ENNHRI's members and the realities of their work in-country. The new financial monitoring tools, developed in 2023, will be applied throughout the year for closer monitoring and efficient use of funds. ENNHRI's Business Plan will be implemented and applied to prioritise fundraising initiatives for our core work. We will also review and enhance our Solidarity Fund.

The indicators for ENNHRI's **Monitoring and Evaluation** Framework will be reviewed, and outcomes of our result orientated monitoring will be used to ensure learning from our activities, and application to make ENNHRI's work stronger and more impactful for the future.

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

Tailored support for NHRI Establishment, in line with Action Plan

Engagement with European states without an NHRI, including in cooperation with partners.

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.

Development of materials for building awareness of SCA process and ENNHRI support.

3. Regional standards on NHRIs are strengthened and implemented

Follow-up to baseline study and action plan on Council of Europe Recommendation on NHRIs.

Actions to implement Council of Europe Reykjavik Declaration commitments on NHRIs.

Awareness raising on NHRIs in context of new European Parliament and Commission mandates.

Publication of materials for raising national actors' awareness of NHRI mandate and standards.

Consultation on role of NHRIs in international armed conflict.

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

Tailored and timely support to NHRIs under threat, with particular attention to Ukrainian NHRI

Analysis of at least one common threat against European NHRIs

Coordination of Contact Group of regional partners to support NHRIs

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

Leadership Forum and Programme

NHRI Academy, in cooperation with ODIHR

Dedicated thematic training and Working Group peer exchange, with reference to thematic priorities

Conference on NHRIs' work on rule of law, including EU Charter and monitoring of EU funds

Small grants to support member activities at national level

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

Actions to implement Council of Europe Reykjavik Declaration commitments on NHRIs.

Advocacy on NHRIs in context of new European Parliament and Commission mandates.

Development of new proposals for NHRI actions in execution of regional judgments

Information sessions for members on opportunities for regional engagement, and impacts of actions

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, and checks and balances)

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, and securitisation and human rights

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

Development of internal rules, in line with updated ENNHRI statutes

Elections for new mandates of Board, Chair, Finance Committee and GANHRI governance roles

Review of indicators for Result Oriented Monitoring

Diversity and inclusion audit, and implementation of gender action plan

9. ENNHRI is a well-managed network

Review of ENNHRI Hub and updates to ENNHRI website

Development of data management systems, and accessibility of ENNHRI outputs

Professional development of staff and increased knowledge of members

Implementation of new financial processes

10. ENNHRI is a financially sustainable network

Strategic funding applications in line with Strategic and Business Plans

Enhancing relations with existing and potential donors

Review of ENNHRI Solidarity Fund