ENNHRI European Network of
National Human Rights Institutions

Annual
Report
2020

ENNHRI at a glance

ENNHRI is the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. We bring together over 40 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across Europe to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. Our network provides a platform for collaboration and solidarity in addressing human rights challenges and a common voice for NHRIs at the European level.

NHRIs are state-mandated bodies, independent of government, with a broad constitutional or legal mandate to protect and promote human rights at the national level.

At ENNHRI, we work to:

> **Strengthen** NHRIs by facilitating the exchange of information and good practices and organising capacity-building activities

> **Support** NHRIs with their compliance with the UN Paris Principles in their establishment and accreditation and when they come under threat

> **Connect** NHRIs to European institutions by facilitating their engagement with regional mechanisms, raising their visibility and intervening on regional legal and policy developments

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

In line with our current Strategic Plan, our work is focused around achieving three core objectives:

> More European NHRIs in compliance with the UN Paris Principles

> More effective promotion and protection of human rights in Europe

> A strong and sustainable network

During 2018-2021, particular attention is dedicated to the following thematic areas:

> Democracy and the rule of law

> Economic and social rights

> Asylum and migration

Our project to enhance the effectiveness of NHRIs in promoting and protecting human rights in situations of (post-)conflict in Europe, which concluded in 2020.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

CDDH-INST	Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights Drafting Group on Civil Society and National Human Rights Institutions
CoE	Council of Europe
CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DG JUST	European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENNHRI	European Network of National Human Rights Institutions
Equinet	European Network of Equality Bodies
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
LIBE	European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSIFE	Open Society Initiative for Europe
SCA	GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Foreword

Against a backdrop of already existing challenges to rule of law in Europe, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures, continued to impact greatly on human rights across Europe. ENNHRI and its member institutions had to adapt their ways of working considerably, but rose to the challenge to promote and protect human rights, even under difficult working conditions.

NHRIs continued to provide human rights monitoring, reporting and support to rights-holders, through innovative adaptations in their work practices. ENNHRI facilitated exchange between members to share solutions to the common challenges they faced, and established a database of good practices. All NHRIs came together to make strong statements on the need to respect human rights, democracy and rule of law during an emergency situation, and also during recovery.

Despite COVID-19, ENNHRI delivered on its ambitious work plan, and integrated COVID-19 dimensions across all of its priority areas. The NHRI Academy took place online, and focused on NHRIs' promotion mandate in relation to migrants' human rights. This complemented ongoing work on the human rights of migrants at borders, for which a Guidance on monitoring work was adapted to meet the new COVID-19 realities. Similarly, ENNHRI's work on economic and social rights focussed on a human rights based approach to recovery.

ENNHRI's first rule of law report resulted in the recognition of NHRIs as both an indicator and safeguard of rule of law. In its Charter Strategy, the European Commission also underlined the importance of Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs to address the accountability gap in securing rights for individuals across Europe. The FRA Report on NHRIs also called for more A-status NHRIs, and their engagement at European level. At the same time, the draft Council of Europe Recommendation on NHRIs promoted NHRI strengthening, and their cooperation in the Council of Europe.

This momentum has been harnessed by ENNHRI to provide more extensive support to NHRI establishment and accreditation, and when NHRIs come under threat. Leadership Webinars and our online Annual Conference addressed how the potential of NHRIs can be used more effectively through greater access and use of European mechanisms.

The outcomes of this extensive work throughout 2020 leave ENNHRI, and NHRIs, in a stronger position to face the ongoing challenges across Europe, and enhance their promotion and protection of human rights in 2021.

Caroline Fennell
ENNHRI Chair
Irish Human Rights and
Equality Commission

Debbie Kohner
Secretary-General
ENNHRI

2020 Highlights

80,000

SESSIONS ON ENNHRI WEBSITE

5

NHRIS ACHIEVING A-STATUS
(RE-)ACCREDITATION

1,300

NEW FOLLOWERS ON
TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

15

ENNHRI SPEAKING ROLES AT
EUROPEAN EVENTS

15

NHRI WEBINARS AND
TRAINING ACTIVITIES

1,320

PARTICIPATIONS IN
ENNHRI EVENTS

13

ENNHRI COMMON POSITIONS
AND STATEMENTS

2020 highlights
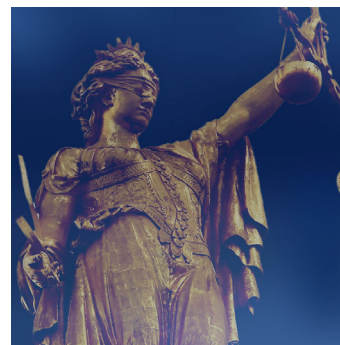
First ENNHRI Report on the State of Rule of Law across Europe

ENNHRI produced its first annual rule of law report, which contains national reports by members, based on a network-wide methodology. The report included European trends in relation to the core topics: independence and effectiveness of NHRIs, restrictions on civil society space, pressure on democratic checks and balances, justice systems, media pluralism, corruption, and responses to the COVID-19 outbreak. Specific submissions were made for the EU rule of law cycle.

Greater recognition of NHRIs at the European level

In 2020, a number of reports and policy initiatives adopted at the Council of Europe and EU recognised the important role of NHRIs in advancing human rights for all. Building on this, our online Annual Conference and Leadership Webinars brought together representatives of NHRIs, European and international bodies and civil society to exchange on strategic engagement with NHRIs to strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

Capacity-building: NHRIs and the European Court of Human Rights

In collaboration with the European Implementation Network and the Council of Europe Department for the Execution of Judgments, we hosted a series of webinars helping to strengthen NHRIs' capacities in the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. We also published a guide for NHRIs on third-party interventions before the Court.

2020 highlights

NHRI Academy 2020: Framing migration from a human rights perspective

The 2020 edition of the annual NHRI Academy focused on 'framing migration from a human rights perspective', with particular attention of NHRIs' human rights promotion mandate. In follow-up to the series of online training sessions, participants initiated action plans to put their learning into practice through campaign initiatives.

New guide and videos: Human rights in (post-)conflict situations

In 2020, we concluded our three-year project on the human rights in (post-) conflict with the launch of an online guide and video gallery, bringing together the outcomes of the project and the perspectives of a range of NHRIs, civil society organisations and regional and international institutions.
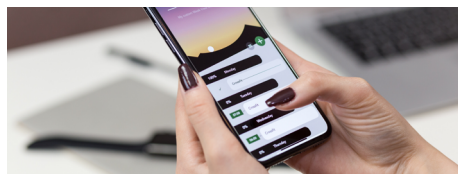
ENNHRI Hub: A new platform for member engagement

In 2020, we launched the ENNHRI Hub, an online platform to allows members to access information and resources, and to share and exchange with other members. Having attracted 175 users throughout the year, the Hub strengthened network engagement in a virtual environment, which has been especially crucial in the COVID-19 context.

In the news: NHRIs and the COVID-19 pandemic

Our initiatives to raise visibility of NHRIs' work in the COVID-19 context – including through online content, peer-exchange meetings and data collection – led to our first appearance on international television. Our Secretary-General, Debbie Kohner, spoke live on BBC World News TV about the impact of the pandemic on democratic rights and the rule of law in Europe and the role of NHRIs.

Key achievements

1. More European NHRIs in compliance with the UN Paris Principles

Our work towards ensuring more European NHRIs in compliance with the UN Paris Principles involves providing support to the establishment of NHRIs, with the process of NHRI accreditation and for NHRIs under threat. In 2020, a number of key achievements were made in this area, while stronger recognition of the NHRI mandate by regional stakeholders has brought more attention to the importance of establishing and strengthening A-status NHRIs throughout Europe.

Supporting the establishment of NHRIs

We continued to provide expertise on the establishment of NHRIs in Europe, positioning ENNHRI as the leading actor in advising governments, NGOs and other relevant parties in this area. We also conducted outreach to relevant stakeholders, such as Ministries, academics and existing national institutions, in countries where an NHRI has not yet been established.

In Belgium, significant developments took place in relation to the newly-established Belgian Federal Human Rights Institute; we were consulted by authorities in relation to concretising the establishment of the NHRI and its relationship with the existing ENNHRI members in the country. In Switzerland, a draft bill on the establishment of an NHRI was released. Moreover, in Italy, a Parliamentary Committee reached an agreement for a unified version of a draft bill for the establishment of an NHRI. We have also actively engaged on NHRI establishment in Iceland, Malta and Sweden.

Key achievements

Supporting NHRI accreditation

In 2020, we provided tailored support to all European NHRIs undergoing (re-) accreditation. Following the virtual session of the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) in December, the Estonian NHRI (Chancellor of Justice of Estonia) was accredited with A status (its first accreditation), and the Slovenian NHRI (Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman) was upgraded from B to A status.

The NHRIs of Albania (People's Advocate of Albania), Latvia (Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia) and the Netherlands (Netherlands Institute for

Human Rights) were re-accredited with A status, while the Serbian NHRI (Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia) had its accreditation review deferred for one year.

Finally, ENNHRI supported the adaptation of the SCA's working methods to a virtual setting, helping to ensure its continuity of work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting NHRIs under threat

In 2020, we reacted swiftly to support NHRIs facing challenges that could undermine their ability to work effectively and independently, working alongside regional and international partners.

Source: Scott Graham/Unsplash

In February, we issued a joint statement with GANHRI, the International Ombudsman Institute, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Equinet, in support of the Georgian NHRI (Office of the Public Defender of Georgia), responding to the state's breach of confidentiality of the NHRI's prison visits and subsequent attacks on the institution.

In October, following challenges faced by the Polish NHRI (Office of the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights) in relation to transitional arrangements after the end of term of the NHRI head, we issued an Opinion on the international

standards and regional practices applicable in such situations.

We also reported to GANHRI on regional trends on threats to NHRIs in Europe, feeding into a broader submission to the UN Assistant Secretary-General's report on reprisals of human rights defenders.

Key achievements

2. More effective promotion and protection of human rights

Our network supports European NHRIs to promote and protect human rights more effectively in a number of ways, including by building their capacities to effect change at the national level and by supporting their effective engagement, recognition and visibility at the European and international levels. Focus is given on our priority thematic areas, including democracy and the rule of law, asylum and migration, and economic and social rights.

Regional recognition of NHRIs

In 2020, a number of reports and policies at the Council of Europe and EU were launched and adopted, recognising the important role of NHRIs in advancing human rights for all.

In February, we held a high-level consultation meeting in Brussels on the Council of Europe's review of its Committee of Ministers Recommendation on NHRIs, gathering representatives of 19 European NHRIs, Council of Europe actors and other stakeholders. As an outcome, key recommendations were submitted to the Council of Europe. Following this, the draft text of the Recommendation adopted at a meeting of the Council of Europe

High-level consultation on Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on NHRIs (6 February 2020 – Brussels, Belgium)

CDDH-INST in March proposed strong recommendations for Member States to establish, strengthen and cooperate with NHRIs. The Recommendation is expected to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers in early 2021.

We actively engaged with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in the preparation of its report on NHRIs – a milestone document for the increased recognition of NHRIs in the EU and its Members States, which also provides a significant push towards the establishment of A-status institutions. We also successfully advocated for the inclusion of NHRIs in the new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024), which includes explicit reference to independent NHRIs and the need to support them, in line with the UN Paris Principles.

In December, the European Commission presented its new Strategy to strengthen the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, which makes recommendations on the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs as well as the role of NHRIs and ENNHRI in implementing the Charter Strategy. This came following our input submitted at the Commission's invitation, in which we provided our insights and experience, as well as information from NHRIs, on the Charter and its implementation.

1. Strong rule of law, democracy and human rights in Europe need **strong NHRIs in compliance with the UN PPs** in each country

2. Further build on NHRIs' role in bridging **European policies with national realities**

3. Further build on NHRIs' role in bridging **national realities with European values**

4. Further **develop complementarities and cooperation** across variety of human rights actors for positive impacts on the ground

Building together for Human Rights
European policies
National realities
NHRIs

Online Annual Conference and Leadership Webinars

At the culmination of our series of policy engagements throughout 2020, our online Annual Conference in December brought together representatives of NHRIs, European and international bodies and civil society to exchange on strategic engagement with NHRIs to strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. It followed two Leadership Webinars held in November, focusing on opportunities for NHRIs to enhance human rights, democracy and the rule of through new EU internal and external policy instruments.

At these events, NHRI heads and European policy actors exchanged on how NHRIs' strategic engagement at the regional level can effect positive change at the national level. As a result of these discussions, a number of opportunities for NHRIs were identified, and there was a commitment to further strengthen cooperation between NHRIs and regional bodies.

Andreas Peschke, Director-General for European Affairs at the German Foreign Office, delivering a keynote address at ENNHRI's online Annual Conference (2 December 2020) (Source: GERonEurope/Twitter)

We also raised visibility of the work of NHRIs operating beyond the EU through our inputs on the European Commission's 2020 Enlargement Package and Eastern Partnership, while also publishing a guide for EU external action actors on engaging with NHRIs on human rights and democracy.

Democracy and rule of law

2020 saw major developments in NHRIs' contribution to monitoring the rule of law at the European level. We published a comprehensive online report on the state of the rule of law in Europe, a collaborative effort across our membership that brought together NHRI perspectives on the situation in their country. All national reports, each

of which followed a common network methodology, were collated into one ENNHRI report, which identified trends across Europe. The report included the accreditation status and SCA recommendations for each European NHRI, as well as any challenges faced in the enabling environment. In states where no accredited NHRI is in place, the report provided details on progress in establishing an NHRI.

As a result, the European Commission's first annual report for the EU Rule of Law Cycle included strong recognition of NHRIs and their joint efforts through ENNHRI. NHRIs were identified as an indicator and important safeguard for rule of law, and a key component of a state's checks and balances. The

European Commission also engaged with NHRIs and ENNHRI in the follow-up of the findings of the rule of law report, including on how to further support NHRIs in addressing rule of law challenges or threats to their compliance with the Paris Principles.

We were also invited to share our views with the European Parliament LIBE Committee on the proposed Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights mechanism. Following this, NHRIs were recognised in the Parliament's resolution on the Establishment of an EU Mechanism on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights, which stressed that an independent NHRI in compliance with the UN Paris Principles can also serve as an indicator of respect for democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in EU Member States.

Moreover, we made a submission to the European Commission on its new European Democracy Action Plan,

which aims to tackle key challenges for European democracy, including in relation to elections, media freedom and pluralism, and the fight against democracy.

In December, we co-hosted a webinar with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) that outlined a step-by-step roadmap for NHRIs in situations of a public emergency, with a particular focus on the COVID-19 crisis. The event was based on ODIHR's reference tool on NHRIs in a public emergency launched in October, for which be provided input.

Our Legal Working Group explored legal tools for human rights implementation, strategic litigation and responses to counter-terrorism measures. This included the Working Group's engagement in capacity-building activities related to legal developments at the regional level.

High-level consultation with NHRIs on the EU rule of law mechanism (5 February 2020 – Brussels, Belgium)

Key achievements

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Economic and social rights

In 2020, our work on economic and social rights focused on the impact of COVID-19 and promoting a human rights-based approach to recovery. In April, we issued a statement calling on the EU to put economic and social rights at the heart of its economic response to the pandemic – a message reiterated by our partners at the Council of Europe and Equinet and discussed with civil society, trade unions and EU actors through the Council of Europe-FRA-ENNHRI-Equinet Platform on social and economic rights.

Capacity-building: NHRIs and the European Court of Human Rights

In collaboration with the European Implementation Network and the Council of Europe Department for the Execution of Judgments, we hosted a series of webinars helping to strengthen NHRIs' capacities in the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The webinars helped to inform and train NHRI representatives about the importance of implementation work and the ways to mainstream it across their organisations.

We also published a guide for NHRIs on third-party interventions before the Court, which includes a foreword from the President of the Court, Robert Spano. The Guide captures information relevant for NHRIs to undertake such interventions, providing a resource to support NHRI staff in their strategic litigation activities.

Key achievements

We also held a series of webinars throughout the year, including on the human rights dimensions of poverty, the economic and social rights of older persons, economic recovery from the pandemic, and the European Pillar of Social Rights. At these sessions, European NHRIs and our partners from the UN, Council of Europe, EU and civil society shared practices across these areas of work.

Moreover, our Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Working Group prepared a submission for the European Commission's consultation on its Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, calling for a greater role for NHRIs in the Action Plan's implementation. Also, the German NHRI (German Institute for Human Rights), as Chair of the Working Group, initiated the formation of a sub-group on climate change and human rights, which will engage in advocacy on this topic in 2021.

Participants in the 2020 NHRI Academy

Olivier De Schutter, Professor at Université catholique de Louvain and Sciences Po and Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, delivering a webinar on human rights and poverty (12 February 2020 – Brussels, Belgium)

Asylum and migration

In the area of asylum and migration, we focused on supporting NHRIs' work to monitor the rights of migrants at borders, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In January, we published a report outlining evidence and work of European NHRIs in this area. In March, we published a Guidance on monitoring human rights at borders, which we later complemented with an additional resource focused on monitoring challenges in the COVID-19 context. This topic was also the focus of a number of peer-exchange meetings held online with our Asylum and Migration Working Group.

We also strategically positioned the role of NHRIs in regional policy discussions on migration, including through a statement highlighting why NHRIs are part of the solution to achieving stronger human rights monitoring at Europe's borders.

NHRI Academy 2020: Framing migration from a human rights perspective

Our annual NHRI Academy, organised with OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights with the support of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, was held as a series of 12 online sessions. This edition's focus was on 'framing migration from a human rights perspective', with particular attention of NHRIs' human rights promotion mandate. In follow-up to the event, participants initiated action plans to put their learning into practice through campaign initiatives, supported with coaching from the Academy's lead trainer, Thomas Coombes.

The statement attracted 600 views and has served as a basis for our ongoing efforts to raise the voice of European NHRIs in discussions around human rights monitoring mechanisms, including through a bilateral meeting in September with the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson.

The statement was the basis of our input on the European Commission's new Pact of Migration and Asylum and the European Parliament LIBE Committee's

Key achievements

draft report on the implementation of the Return Directive. In relation to the latter, the Parliament adopted a resolution calling on EU Member States to respect NHRIs' mandate and make use of their function as independent monitoring bodies.

We also provided input to the review of the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration in Europe, including through a submission and formal intervention at the intergovernmental Regional (UNECE) Review of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration..

Communicating human rights, NHRIs and ENNHRI

Significant steps forward were made in 2020 in raising visibility of NHRIs and ENNHRI in Europe. Our website attracted over 80,000 visits (63% higher than in 2019), while our Twitter and Facebook followers grew by 24%, reflecting greater prominence of NHRIs and their work. This was largely driven by our web content highlighting the work and impact of NHRIs during the COVID-19 pandemic, which alone attracted about 15-20% of traffic to the website.

Debbie Kohner speaking alongside Sandra Liebenberg, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on BBC World News (16 July 2020)

We also supported NHRIs to strengthen knowledge and skills in communicating on human rights in the context of the pandemic. In September, we held an online training led by Israel Butler from the Civil Liberties Union for Europe on 'how to talk about human rights during COVID-19', attended by communication and policy staff from around 20 NHRIs.

Our Communications Working Group elected Jason McKeown representing the Northern Ireland NHRI (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission) as Chair and Molly Avigdor representing the Great Britain NHRI (Equality and Human Rights Commission) as Vice-Chair. They continued from Emma Hutton from the Scottish NHRI (Scottish Human Rights Commission), who served as Chair for three years, making a pivotal impact on the strategic direction of communications at ENNHRI.

Stellenbosch   Studio   Belfast

BBC WORLD NEWS

In the news: NHRIs and the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020, we made a concerted effort to highlight the work and impact of NHRIs in the context of COVID-19 and called for solidarity on human rights in the wake of the pandemic. We collected information from NHRIs about their responses to the crisis – including through peer-exchange meetings and a data collection exercise – and showcased this work through a range of online content.

This included publishing a series of blog articles and statements, while also ensuring a clear focus on COVID-19 considerations across different areas of policy work. For example, we published material highlighting NHRIs' continued monitoring of the rights of migrants and people with disabilities during the pandemic, protection of economic and social rights in the context of economic recovery policies, promotion of public accountability in the face of states of emergency, and responding to the pandemic in a post-conflict society.

Our work on COVID-19 and human rights also initiated our first appearance on international television. In June, our Secretary-General, Debbie Kohner, spoke live on BBC World News TV about the impact of the pandemic on democratic rights and the rule of law in Europe, highlighting the trends identified by European NHRIs in our report on the state of the rule of law in Europe. This helped contribute towards the report's visibility, with it being accessed over 1,000 times.

Key achievements

Other thematic areas

Human rights in (post-)conflict

In 2020, we concluded our three-year project on the human rights in (post-) conflict with the launch of our online 'Guide on the Role of NHRIs in (Post-) Conflict Situations', which brought together the outcomes of the workshops, meetings, research and other activities we carried out in this area during 2017-2020. The Guide provides resources for NHRIs and other stakeholders on different topics, including internal displacement, economic and social rights, human rights and counter-terrorism, human rights in non-government controlled territories and peacebuilding.

This was also complemented by an online video gallery, where representatives of NHRIs in Europe and other regions, as well as civil society organisations and regional and international institutions, shared their perspectives on NHRIs' important work to promote and protect human rights in (post-)conflict contexts. This digital format, as well as the online engagement meetings held during the year, enabled an exchange of ideas about the project's outcomes and impacts and the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, we also launched our new paper on the role and responsibilities on NHRIs in promoting and protecting human rights in non-government controlled, non-recognised and other disputed territories. The paper, which came at the request of several members following meetings and workshops held in 2019, explores the work of NHRIs in Europe operating in these sensitive contexts.

Rights of persons with disabilities

Our Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), chaired by the Georgian NHRI (Office of the Public Defender of Georgia), held a number of online exchanges on good practices and challenges with regards to monitoring, promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities during the pandemic.

For example, a webinar was organised on on-site monitoring of the rights of persons with disabilities with NHRIs, civil society organisations, key experts in the field and others. The Working Group also held a joint meeting with the EU's CRPD Monitoring Framework to address EU developments in this field and how NHRIs can play a role in this context.

Together with Mental Health Europe, we published a report in June on supported decision-making for people with disabilities and the role of NHRIs in ensuring compliance with international standards. The report includes a foreword from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Catalina Devandas-Aguilar, encouraging the use of the report towards achieving equal recognition before the law of all persons with disabilities in Europe.

ENNHRI and Mental Health Europe publication on implementing supported decision-making for people with disabilities

In 2020, the Working Group welcomed Ekaterine Skhiladze to the Chair position, continuing the work of Rusudan Kokhodze, both representing the Georgian NHRI. The efforts and dedication of colleagues at the Georgian NHRI in driving initiatives in this area were greatly valued, especially given the particular challenges faced by people with disabilities in the COVID-19 pandemic context.

ENNHRI and Mental Health Europe publication on implementing supported decision-making for people with disabilities

Source: Darrel Und/Pexels

Source: Marcus Aurelius/Pexels

Business and human rights

In 2020, our Business and Human Rights Working Group addressed important regional developments through submissions to the European Commission. This included a statement underlining human rights issued in the revised EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive and a statement calling for greater involvement of the EU and its Member States in the development of a binding UN treaty on business and human rights.

The Working Group also continued to meet online. It welcomed Daniel Morris as Chair, continuing on from Elin Wrzoncki, both representing the Danish NHRI (Danish Institute for Human Rights). Their work has been crucial to sustaining coordinated activity among European NHRIs in this area.

Sustainable Development Goals

Many of our members continued their engagement with the human rights dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In March, a number of NHRIs participated in the online sessions of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. Alison Hosie from the Scottish NHRI (Scottish Human Rights Commission) represented ENNHRI at the roundtable session on leveraging data and statistics for SDG progress, presenting about accelerating progress through human rights data and partnerships.

Artificial intelligence and human rights

In 2020, we facilitated European NHRIs' involvement as observers in the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence, and a core group of ENNHRI members was established to explore the issue and possible common actions by ENNHRI. Moreover, we contributed to the European Commission's White Paper on Artificial Intelligence, setting out recommendations for a rights-based development of artificial intelligence in Europe.
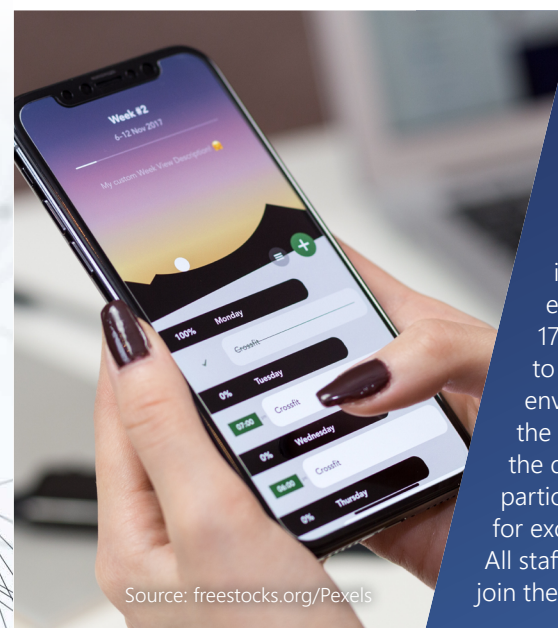
Key achievements

3. A strong and sustainable network

In 2020, we took key steps towards building and maintaining a strong and sustainable network. This included initiatives to strengthen online engagement and networking among members, especially given travel restrictions, as well as continued enhancement of our management, governance and fundraising activities.
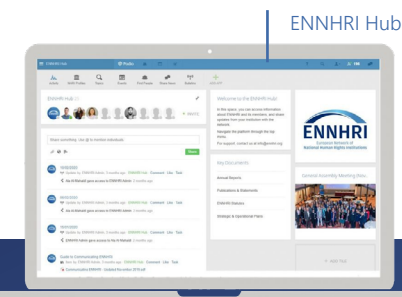
Member engagement and network communications

To support our members' engagement in ENNHRI, we developed a Members' Guide – giving an overview of the benefits and opportunities of membership – as well as guidelines for member-led activities to help NHRIs make the most out of the network. Also, our monthly member newsletters continued to help ensure a regular flow of information to our network regarding news and updates from ENNHRI and our partners, as well as updates on European policy developments. All of these resources are available or our new ENNHRI Hub.

ENNHRI Hub

ENNHRI Hub: A new platform for member engagement

In June, we launched our new ENNHRI Hub, an online platform that allows members to access information and resources, and to share and exchange with other members. The Hub attracted 175 users from across our membership, helping to strengthen network engagement in a virtual environment, which has been especially crucial in the COVID-19 context. It was also used to facilitate the delivery of the first online NHRI Academy, whose participants and trainers evaluated the tool as useful for exchange, mutual learning and networking. All staff from our member institutions are welcome to join the Hub.

Source: freestocks.org/Pexels

Effective contribution to GANHRI governance

In 2020, we continued to actively support GANHRI by providing regional input on its global strategies, including through our contribution to GANHRI's new Strategic Plan and participation in its governance bodies and annual conference. We also collated data to support GANHRI's access to information about European NHRIs' work during COVID-19.

Our participation in and support of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), whose work took place online, also continued. At our General Assembly meeting in December, the Great Britain NHRI (Equality and Human Rights Commission) was elected to be the European member of the SCA, whose three-year mandate commences in July 2021. Anna Chabiera from the Polish NHRI (Office of the Polish Commission for Human Rights) was elected as the European representative in the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing.

Strengthening our governance and management

With remote teleworking becoming the norm for most of 2020, our Secretariat moved its operations online in March. Our governance bodies – including the

ENNHRI Secretariat participating in Human Rights Day #RecoverBetter campaign (10 December 2020)

Board, Finance Committee and General Assembly – also continued to meet online. Our entire membership was able to meet in plenary at our General Assembly meeting, which allowed members to continue their participation in the governance of the network, despite travel restrictions.

The findings of our annual Result-Oriented Monitoring Report were considered and its recommendations followed up on by the Secretariat and Board. In particular, the need for greater prioritisation and division of work between the Secretariat, Board and members were identified, leading us to re-focus priorities on core areas of our Strategic Plan, and reinforce our tools to facilitate member-led work, including the ENNHRI Hub and guidelines for members.

In 2020, we also facilitated more integration among our Working Groups. The Chairs of our Working Groups met twice to contribute to planning and input on ways to enhance member engagement in the network. One outcome was the appointment of members of the Communications Working Group as thematic 'focal points' for other Working Groups, helping to better connect communication perspectives and thematic areas.

The capacity and effectiveness of the Secretariat continued to be strengthened, including through staff training, reviews of internal processes and guidelines, and the implementation of new protocols for teleworking.

ENNHRI Secretariat participating in Human Rights Day #RecoverBetter campaign (10 December 2020)

Fundraising

We undertake ongoing business development activities in order for our network to remain sustainable. In 2020, beyond the valued membership fees, we were grateful to receive an operating grant through a Framework Partnership with the European Commission (DG JUST), and two project grants through EIDHR (NHRI·EU) and OSIFE.

We stepped up our fundraising efforts, including with the launch of a members' Solidarity Fund, which attracted generous contributions from members for thematic work, in particular from the Finnish NHRI for our work on rule of law. We also developed communication tools to showcase our impact to funders, and developed relationships for potential new funding opportunities.

ENNHRI received extensive in-kind funding in 2020 through members' staff time, the contributions of ODIHR and the Global Campus for Human Rights to the NHRI Academy, and the Council of Europe's support for Cooperation Platforms (on 'social and economic rights' and 'Roma equality').

Annexes

Common positions and statements

- [Submission to the European Commission consultation on the 2020 European Commission Enlargement Package](31 January 2020)

- [Submission to CDDH INST on the revision of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on NHRIs](17 February 2020)

- [Joint Statement in Support of the Public Defender of Georgia](21 February 2020)

- [Now is the time for solidarity on human rights: The need for human rights in COVID-19 responses in Europe](23 April 2020)

- [The EU must put economic and social rights at the heart of its economic response to COVID-19](6 May 2020)

- [Submission on the rule of law in the European Union – Reports from National Human Rights Institutions](11 May 2020)

- [Submission on the new European Commission Strategy on the Effective Application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU](25 May 2020)

- [Submission for the public consultation on revision of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive 2014/95/EU](9 June 2020)

- [Submission on the European Democracy Action Plan](15 September 2020)

- [Opinion on Transitional Arrangements in the context of the Selection and Appointment of the Head of a National Human Rights Institution](15 October 2020)

- [Statement on EU and its Member States' involvement in the development of a Treaty on Business and Human Rights](22 October 2020)

- [Human rights must be at the centre of the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration in Europe](4 November 2020)

- [Submission on Consultation for an Action Plan to Implement the European Pillar of Social Rights](20 November 2020)

Board, Finance Committee and Secretariat - As of 31 December 2020

Board

Member	Represented by
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (Chair)	Caroline Fennell
Office of the People's Advocate of Albania	Erinda Ballanca
Office of the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia	Lora Vidović
Greek National Commission for Human Rights	Maria Gavouneli
Norwegian National Human Rights Institution	Petter Wille
Office of the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights	Mirosław Wróblewski

Finance Committee

Member	Represented by
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (Chair)	Lorraine Hamill
Unia – Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (Belgium)	Emmanuel Schelfthout
German Institute for Human Rights	Michael Windfuhr
Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain)	Alan Sharman

Secretariat

Staff member	Position
Debbie Kohner	Secretary-General
Christina Gesios	Senior Finance Officer
Katrien Meuwissen	Senior Human Rights Officer
Maurice Claassens	Senior Network Development Officer
Gabriel Almeida	Human Rights Officer
Nina Pániková	Human Rights Officer
Christos Katsalis	Administration Officer
Ala Al-Mahaidi	Communications Officer
Chrysanthi Tsolaki	Human Rights Trainee
Martina Giani	Communications Trainee

We pay tribute to Valentina Purcel and Zoé Vautard, who found new opportunities in 2020 following their dedicated work since 2017 on our Project on NHRIs in Situations of (Post-)Conflict. We also thank our trainees for their invaluable contributions: Cristina Pugnale, Chrysanthi Tsolaki, Jamila Stute, Martina Giani, Mathilde Bénard and Tina Hadžić.

Working Groups - As of 31 December 2020

Working Group	Chair
Asylum and Migration	Office of the Ombudswoman of Croatia (Maja Kević)
Business and Human Rights	Danish Institute for Human Rights (Daniel Morris)
Communications	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (Jason McKeown)
	Vice-Chair: Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain) (Molly Avigdor)
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Office of the Public Defender of Georgia (Ekaterine Skhiladze)
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	German Institute for Human Rights (Sara Phung)
Legal	Finnish Human Rights Centre (Leena Leikas)

2020 accounts

	BUDGET 2020		TOTAL REALISED 31/12/2020	%age REALISED
INCOME				
Membership fees	€	144.000	€ 146.500,00	102%
Additional contributions from members			€ 15.899,43	
Operating Grant - DG JUST	€	589.423	€ 548.375,69	93%
NHRI.EU - DG DEVCO	€	148.458	€ 77.196,26	52%
NHRI.EU - DG DEVCO (Reimbursements)			€ -	
HR & Conflict Project - DG DEVCO	€	196.663	€ 164.797,54	84%
OSIFE Grant	€	109.530	€ 46.223,80	
CoE Grant			€ 7.500,00	
TOTAL INCOME	**€**	**1.188.075**	**€ 1.006.492,72**	**85%**
EXPENDITURE				
1. Personnel costs	€	749.912	€ 758.569,44	101%
1.1. Staff	€	744.018	€ 753.959,27	
2. Office costs	€	112.701	€ 117.076,04	104%
2.1. Rent	€	84.596	€ 93.450,00	
2.2. Communication	€	19.837	€ 18.968,55	
2.3. Materials	€	8.268	€ 4.657,49	
2.4. Other office costs	€	-	€ 208,86	
3. Travel and Meeting costs	€	239.106	€ 22.933,22	10%
3.1. Travels and Subsistence	€	226.820	€ 15.164,96	
3.2. Meeting costs	€	12.286	€ 7.768,26	
4. Professional fees	€	81.356	€ 77.703,20	96%
4.1. Accountant / Finance Costs	€	20.169	€ 16.571,08	
4.2. Consultancies / Audit fees	€	61.186	€ 61.132,12	
5. Exceptional costs			€ 35.903,28	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**€**	**1.183.075**	**€ 1.012.185,18**	**86%**
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENDITURE	**€**	**5.000**	**€ -5.692,47**	

RESERVES at end 2020   **€   75.601**

List of ENNHRI members

Country	Institution	Accreditation Status
Albania	People's Advocate of Albania	A
Armenia	Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia	A
Austria	Austrian Ombudsman Board	B
Azerbaijan	Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan	B
Belgium	Unia – Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities	B
Belgium	Myria – Federal Migration Centre	None
Belgium	Combat Poverty, Insecurity and Social Exclusion Service	None
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ombudsmen of Bosnia and Herzegovina	A
Bulgaria	Commission for Protection Against Discrimination	B
Bulgaria	Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria	A
Croatia	Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia	A
Cyprus	Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights	B
Czech Republic	Public Defender of Rights	None
Denmark	Danish Institute for Human Rights	A
Estonia	Chancellor for Justice of Estonia	A
Finland	Human Rights Centre and the Parliamentary Ombudsman	A
France	National Consultative Commission on Human Rights	A
Georgia	Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia	A
Germany	German Institute for Human Rights	A
Great Britain	Equality and Human Rights Commission	A
Greece	Greek National Commission for Human Rights	A
Hungary	Commissioner for Fundamental Rights	A
Ireland	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	A

Country	Institution	Accreditation Status
Kosovo	Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo	None
Latvia	Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia	A
Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein Human Rights Association	None
Lithuania	Seimas Ombudsmen's Office of the Republic of Lithuania	A
Luxembourg	Consultative Human Rights Commission of Luxembourg	A
Moldova	People's Advocate of the Republic of Moldova	A
Montenegro	Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro	B
Netherlands	Netherlands Institute for Human Rights	A
North Macedonia	Ombudsman Institution of the Republic of Macedonia	B
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	A
Norway	Norwegian National Human Rights Institution	A
Poland	Commissioner for Human Rights	A
Portugal	Portuguese Ombudsman	A
Romania	Romanian Institute for Human Rights	None
Russian Federation	High Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation	A
Scotland	Scottish Human Rights Commission	A
Serbia	Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia	A
Slovakia	Slovak National Centre for Human Rights	B
Slovenia	Human Rights Ombudsman	A
Spain	Ombudsman of Spain	A
Sweden	Equality Ombudsman	B
Turkey	Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey	None
Ukraine	Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights	A

ENNHRI

European Network of
National Human Rights Institutions