



COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME

COUNCIL OF EUROPE | CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



Council of Europe

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European Union

Union européenne

Strasbourg, 21 April 2008

CommDH/NHRS(2008)12

Original version

Joint European Union – Council of Europe Programme

Setting up an active network of independent non-judicial human rights structures

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

Objective of the programme

Co-financed by the Council of Europe and the European Union the Project (referred to as “The Peer-to-Peer Project”) consists of a work programme to be implemented by the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in 2008 and 2009. It aims at setting up an active network of independent non-judicial National Human Rights Structures (NHRS) compliant with the Paris Principles, with special focus on non EU member States. The Peer-to-Peer Project seeks to enable national structures to improve their performances in terms of:

- raising human rights awareness in their countries;
- detecting potential or existing human rights problems;
- proceeding to efficient investigations where this is in their mandate;
- engaging in constructive dialogue with the authorities to avert or solve problems of human rights protection;
- triggering rapid mobilisation of international partners if necessary.

The project also intends to support the setting-up of new NHRS at national, regional or local level, where they do not exist.

Activities

The main tool of the programme will be the organisation of workshops for small groups of practitioners from the NHRS to convey select information on the legal norms governing priority areas of NHRS action and to proceed to a peer review of relevant practices used or envisaged throughout Europe. A manual in several languages will be prepared after each workshop for dissemination amongst NHRS and other relevant actors. The choice of the themes for the workshops takes due account of priorities indicated by the NHRS.

In the first year, five workshops and one round table will be organised in Italy and Russia, in partnership with the “Centre on Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples” of the University of Padua, and the St Petersburg Humanitarian and Political Science “Strategy” Centre in St Petersburg.

An annual steering meeting of NHRS Contact Persons will be organised to evaluate the past project activities and design the future ones.

The project will also provide a forum to enhance the system of information sharing between NHRSs in dealing with specific cases, with a particular focus on good practices. To this end a mailing list and a web page will be developed.

Missions will be also organised to countries where interest in setting up a NHRS is expressed, in coordination with other International Organisations and with the participation of existing national structures.

Target groups

The main target of the workshops are specialised staff members of the NHRS. For each workshop, depending on the topic, the Commissioner's Contact Persons within the NHRS shall identify the specialised staff member(s) who would like to participate in the activity.

As the Joint Project with the European Commission targets more specifically the NHRS of Council of Europe member States which are not members of the European Union (especially Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Serbia, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine), participation costs will be borne for the specialised staff members from the NHRS from these countries.

The participation of the Contact Persons in the annual meetings will be fully covered for all.

Additional information

For additional information please contact Delphine FREYMANN, project manager, NHRS Unit of the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (delphine.frey mann@coe.int, phone +33 3 88 41 38 43).