CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Supporting National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies to promote and protect social and economic rights as laid down in the European Social Charter

3 February 2023

Introduction

The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe (COE) human rights treaty that guarantees social and economic rights and complements the European Convention on Human Rights. The Charter has been ratified by 42 Council of Europe member States and has been signed, but not yet ratified, by the remaining four member States.

The Charter ensures the protection of a broad range of everyday human rights that are fundamental to ensure human dignity. Those rights relate to employment, housing, health, education, social protection and welfare, and offers protection against poverty and social exclusion. The Charter places special emphasis on the protection of persons in situations of vulnerability, such as older persons, children, persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty and migrants. The enjoyment of these rights has to be guaranteed to all without discrimination.

Apart from being recognised as a unique and precious international law instrument that has contributed to strengthening the protection of social rights in Council of Europe member States and to improving the lives of people across Europe, the Charter has also been broadly acknowledged as an incomparable resource for the reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The implementation of the Charter by States Parties is supervised by the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) through a reporting procedure and a collective complaints procedure.

National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies can meaningfully engage and contribute to both of these procedures. More importantly, they have a unique role to play in the protection and promotion of social and economic rights at national level according to their mandates and the country-specific context.

Overall objective of the action

The overall objectives of the action are:

- to enhance the knowledge of ENNHRI and EQUINET members[1] of the European Social Charter and its use at national level,
- to consolidate their capacities to examine, having regard to their respective specific mandates, the implementation of the Charter's provisions at national level and make a positive contribution to national policy-shaping and decision-making,
- to enhance their skills and ability to submit alternative reports to the ECSR in the framework of the monitoring procedures of the Charter,
- to enhance their skills and ability to collaborate with other organisations that can be involved in the monitoring procedures of the Charter,
- to promote acceptance of new provisions of the Charter and the collective complaints procedure.

Scope of action

Effective enjoyment of social rights is possible only if national legislation and practice give due regard to international standards in this field, including the European Social Charter. The key role of social rights in the harmonious development of societies and the effective enjoyment of all rights becomes even more relevant in times of crisis, when there may be temptations to neglect the rule of law and democratic principles. This is particularly true in the current situation, where Europe has to strive for economic recovery after Covid-19 and the devastating effects on human rights of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing cost-of-living crisis throughout Europe.

Members of ENNHRI and EQUINET are therefore invited to identify their specific needs in terms of topic, methodology and implementation of the action in relation to one or several objectives listed above.

The action can be implemented through different methodologies:

- Desk research,
- Publication of a study or other type of learning material,
- Publication of awareness raising materiel,
- Organisation of an activity (seminar, training, roundtable, etc.),
- Thematic expertise.

Expected results/Outcomes

As a result of the action implemented, the selected institution will evidence one or more of the following outcomes:

- improved knowledge of the European Social Charter through enhanced use of the treaty at national level,
- strengthened capacity to monitor the implementation of the Charter's provisions at national level, enhanced competence and capacity to submit alternative reports to the European Committee of Social Rights in the framework of the reporting and collective complaints procedures,
- increased promotion of the acceptance of new provisions of the Charter and the collective complaints procedure.

[1] The call concerns ENNHRI and EQUINET members from Council of Europe member states.

Outputs

The selected institution must submit to the Council of Europe research papers, studies or reports which have been produced in the framework of the funded action or report on activities organised within the action through a narrative report and demonstrate awareness-raising efforts around provisions of the European Social Charter.

Eligibility criteria

Institutions may apply if they fulfil the following criteria:

- The institution is a member of ENNHRI and/or EQUINET in a Council of Europe member state,
- The application is submitted in English or French,
- The action meets the objectives of this call,
- The application is signed by the executive, or the chair of the institution,
- The total estimated budget of the application does not exceed €10,000,
- The proposed action can be implemented in 2023, starting no later than May 2023,
- The application is submitted to the Council of Europe by 10 March 2023.

Proposals

Applicants are invited to submit a two-page proposal by 10 March 2023 in English or French to the Council of Europe, DG I Human Rights and Rule of Law, Department of Social Rights, tanya.montanari@coe.int.

Proposals shall include:

- Overall description of the action,
- Clearly defined objectives in relation to the objectives set out in this call,
- Proposed activities,
- Expected outcomes and outputs,
- Methodology (how the activities are going to meet the objectives set)
- Detailed estimated budget proposal using the template provided as Appendix to this call.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the proposed actions will be carried out by the Council of Europe, Department of Social Rights, in consultation with ENNHRI and EQUINET, on the basis of the relevance of the action to the objectives listed above and its estimated budget.

Selection

The final selection is done by the Council of Europe in consultation with ENNHRI and EQUINET. A maximum of two proposals will be selected and proposed a Grant Agreement with the Council of Europe.

Timeline

Timelines are as per the table below. The time of the implementation period can be adjusted according to needs but it cannot be shorter than six months. The action must be implemented in 2023.
The Social Rights Department of the Council of Europe reserves the right to evaluate the progress of the project at midway.

Step	**Deadline**	**Responsible**
Deadline for submission of proposals	By 10/03/2023	Individual members of ENNHRI/EQUINET
Selection of successful applicants	By 20/03/2023	COE in consultation with ENNHRI and EQUINET
Announcement of the results	By 22/03/2023	COE
Contractual arrangements between the COE and successful institutions	By 06/04/2023	COE
Implementation of the action	15/04-30/11/2023	COE / Contracted institution
Mid-term reporting on the project implementation	Between 01-15/09/2022	COE / Contracted institution
Final deadline for submission of work or reports by contracted institutions	30/12/2023	Contracted institution