

European group of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Newsletter #1
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This document contains general and brief information regarding the activities of the European Group of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (EG).

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I. Meetings

European Coordinating Committee (ECC)

The ECC (institutions from Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland) met in Paris on February 16th to discuss the activities, working methods, and future orientations of the EG. The office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations and a representative from the European Commission were invited.

European Group (EG)

The EG met in Geneva on April 12th during the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Members of the EG also attended meetings of the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs.

Mr. Thoraval, chairman, spoke on behalf of the EG during item 18b of the agenda of the Commission on Human Rights.

II. Substantial issues

Convention of the Council of Europe on the prevention of terrorism

- The EG was consulted on this issue by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe on December 21st 2004. On January 10th, the EG conveyed the opinions of 9 national institutions regarding the first draft of the convention.
- On February 3rd, the EG, jointly with the FIDH and the ICJ, requested to be granted observer status, or at least to be heard, by the CODEXTER (the committee in charge of drafting the convention). This request was rejected.
- Following the second draft of the convention, the EG issued a common position to the CODEXTER on February 25th.

The convention was finalized and should be adopted during the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government in May in Warsaw. The concerns of the EG were not taken into consideration.

Future Human Rights Agency of the European Union

Following the public consultation organized by the European Commission last December, during which the EG had issued a common position, a public hearing took place in Brussels on January 25th. The EG was represented.

The EG will complete its common position.

United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

The Irish Commission for Human Rights organized a meeting of the EG in Dublin on April 16th, dealing specifically with the monitoring mechanism of the convention, in view of a future common position.

III. Future activities and work in progress

Seminar of the Council of Europe on the protection of human rights and the fight against terrorism

This seminar should take place before the next meeting of the CDDH (Steering Committee for Human rights) in order to assess the implementation of the guidelines of 2002 and 2005 at national level. The EG will prepare a note in view of this seminar.

Links with institutions of the European Union

Mr. Thoraval and Mr. Forst will meet Mr. Frattini, vice-president of the European Commission, on May 3rd in order to develop a cooperation with the Commission.

A meeting with Mr. Cavada, chairman of the commission on Civil liberties of the European Parliament, will be organized soon in order to discuss the idea of cooperation with the Parliament.

UN Ad-hoc committee on the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

The committee will hold its 6th session on August 1-12. The Irish commission and the Swedish Ombudsman for persons with disabilities will coordinate the EG in view of preparing this session.

IV. Miscellaneous

-Mr. Brice Dickson, Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) left the NIHRC at the end of February.

-Mr. Michel Forst was appointed Secretary General of the French Advisory Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH), starting May 1st. He takes over from Gerard Fellous, who himself remains with the CNCDH as an advisor to the President.