

European group of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Newsletter #2
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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. Participations

United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

The UN Ad hoc committee in charge of drafting the convention held its 6th session in New York from August 1st to 12th. The European Group (EG) was represented by the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Swedish Ombudsman for persons with disabilities. An international common position of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) was drafted regarding the monitoring mechanism for the convention, following in particular the European group meeting that was held in Dublin on April 16th on the same topic.

Future Human Rights Agency of the European Union

Following the decision taken in April in Geneva during the EG meeting, the EG finalized a common position regarding the structure of the Agency, as a complement to its previous common position. This position was sent on July 15th to the Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union, the EU Parliament, the EU Commission, and to the permanent representation of member states within the Council of the EU.

We have received letters from the Council and the Parliament acknowledging receipt of this position.

Links with European Union Institutions

Mr. Thoraval and Mr. Forst met Mr. Frattini, vice-president of the EU Commission, on May 3rd in Brussels, in order to discuss the possibility of developing a cooperation between the EG and the Commission.

A follow-up meeting was held on June 2nd in Brussels with the European Coordinating committee of NHRIs and Mr. Brun, head of unit in charge of fundamental rights within the “Justice, Liberty, Security” Directorate General of the Commission.

Steering Committee for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

The Steering Committee for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (CDDH) held its 60th session in Strasbourg on June 14-17, chaired by Mr. Boillat (Switzerland). The EG was represented by Miss Djian.

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

This seminar took place before the meeting of the CDDH in order to assess the implementation of the Council of Europe guidelines of 2002 and 2005 at national level. The EG attended the meeting, represented by the CNCDH-France and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

II. Activities in progress and future participations

United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

The ad hoc committee in charge of drafting the convention will hold its 7th session in January 2006 in New York. It should then examine the articles relating to the monitoring mechanism of the convention. The Irish commission and the Swedish Ombudsman for persons with disabilities will coordinate the EG in view of preparing this session.

Links with European Union Institutions

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.

Steering Committee for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

The Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) will hold its 61st session in Strasbourg on November 21-25th.

The DH-PR, its subordinate working group in charge of examining the reforms for improving the Council of Europe procedures for the protection of human rights, will hold meetings on September 21-23 and November 7th.

Technical cooperation program

A technical cooperation project will be implemented in order to provide assistance for the creation and reinforcement of NHRIs in Europe, in accordance with the Paris Principles. A preliminary meeting took place in Paris on July 20th with the CNCDH-France, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This project will be discussed during the next meeting of the European Coordinating committee of NHRIs.

III. Miscellaneous information

European Coordinating Committee (ECC)

The ECC (institutions from Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland) will hold its next meeting in Dublin on October 14th to discuss the activities, working methods, and future orientations of the EG.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)

New commissioners were appointed in June within the NIHRC, including Professor Monica McWilliams as Chief Commissioner.
