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HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



Human Rights Centre

Annual Report 2013

Human Rights Centre Annual Report 2013

Layout template: **Werklig Oy**

Illustrations: **Ilja Karsikas**

Images: **Tomas Whitehouse** (p.7 & 15), **Ari Aalto** (p. 11)

Layout: **Inari Savola**

Printed by: **Vammalan kirjapaino** 2014



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Foreword

Kristiina Kouros



Kristiina Kouros

DIRECTOR (FTA) OF HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE
CHAIR OF HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION

Reflections on values and rights

This is the second annual report of the Human Rights Centre (HRC), which assumed its office in 2012. The report discusses the activities of 2013 in relation to the HRC's statutory tasks, the Paris Principles adopted by the UN to set criteria for the operation of national human rights institutions, and in relation to the HRC's plan of action adopted by the Human Rights Delegation for 2012 and 2013. The first part of the report also describes the international context where the HRC operates, while the last part provides information on various fundamental and human rights events and projects.

We discussed the past year at the first meeting of the Human Rights Delegation in 2014. The Delegation's evaluations on the HRC's activities were encouraging, and we have managed to do a lot. Yet there is also plenty of room for improvement. I highly welcome the fact that a large number of positive expectations and support towards our work have been expressed in the discussions with the Delegation and our other partners. Fundamental and human rights are at the core of Finnish democracy. The values crystallised in these rights clearly have a strong support and Finland is known worldwide for upholding them.

Even though there is a general will to promote and protect fundamental and human rights, all human rights are not, however, easy

and unequivocal issues. The public discussion has recently addressed issues which are strongly related to traditions and values and shake conventional understandings. Even people who in principle have a positive attitude towards human rights may find it difficult to accept all new ideas without any reservations.

The rights of gender and sexual minorities is a good example of this. The second citizen's initiative submitted to the Parliament in Finland's history, titled 'I do', was signed by nearly 167,000 people who were in favour of an equal marriage law. According to the initiative, the marriage law should be amended so as to allow same-sex partners to get married, and they should also be given the right to adopt a child together.

The citizen's initiative was presented to the Speaker in December 2013, and the Parliament had a heated preliminary debate on the initiative in early 2014. The opponents of the amendment have started to collect signatures for a petition, and by the preliminary debate, the petition had been signed by approximately 40,000 people.

The demands for an equal treatment of different religions and convictions have also provoked feelings, which is demonstrated by the discussion on the presence of religion at school events.



It is important that we discuss such issues broadly in society and search for solutions to safeguard the realisation of fundamental and human rights for all to the maximum extent possible with minimal interference with the freedoms of the individual.

It is the duty of the public authority to primarily safeguard equality before the law. According to the Finnish Non-Discrimination Act, the authorities shall seek purposefully and methodically to foster equality in all their actions and, if necessary, alter any circumstances that prevent the realisation of equality. Forbidden grounds for discrimination include both sexual orientation and religion.

From the perspective of public authority, a person belonging to a gender minority must have the same right to family life as other people in every respect, while the freedom of religion includes the right to regard a same-sex marriage as a sin. If necessary, the tensions towards a gender-neutral marriage could be eased by separating a legal and a religious

solemnisation from each other in respect of all marriages. This would allow religious communities to discuss their attitudes towards the marriage of same-sex partners in the right forum. Religious ceremonies are matters that each religious group should decide themselves, and their implementation is probably most successful when the participants share the same understanding of their meaning.

The equal treatment of different religions and convictions requires a neutral and conciliatory role from the public authority in respect of various philosophies of life, which the European Court of Human Rights has also emphasised several times. Respect for human dignity and tolerance towards both homosexuals and dissenters are, however, at the core of human rights. Individuals must have leeway to realise their own rights while respecting those of the others. In this spirit, we should search for solutions to issues which challenge and even violate our own values.

Foreword

Pentti Arajärvi



Pentti Arajärvi

VICE CHAIR OF HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION

Promoting human rights

The task of the Human Rights Delegation is to deal with fundamental and human rights issues of a far-reaching significance and principal importance, yearly approve the HRC's plan of action and annual report and function as a national cooperative body for fundamental and human rights actors.

The list of tasks looks short, and this is the case if we only consider the length of the text. However, the Delegation's field of operation should not be underestimated since its tasks include human rights issues of a far-reaching significance and principal importance. The second item on the list of tasks is actually as broad as the first one and, in a sense, it has the same content since the Human Rights Centre can deal with virtually any fundamental and human rights issue, excluding complaints.

The wide field of operation has had two consequences: the Delegation's composition reflects the spectrum of the whole society and particularly its various phenomena and ways of thinking. At the same time, the Delegation's expertise is considerably broad. Paradoxically, this forces the Delegation to delimit its activities since it is impossible to consider and deal with every issue.

We have decided to focus on a few issues. Education is the key to several things. Knowledge is a factor which allows for rational

decision-making. Since the Delegation has the general task of promoting human rights, strengthening the people's awareness of human rights provides a good starting point. Awareness-raising should be of a formal nature. It is more important to know where information can be obtained than trying to absorb all the available information. People also need to be able to evaluate the correctness and significance of information. This is the objective of the Delegation's activities related to improving human rights education and training.

Future actions and projects will focus on topical issues in particular. It is time that Finland finally ratifies the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The delay in the project is even intolerable. On the other hand, the reason for the delay, i.e. Finland's wish to ensure that it will comply with all the requirements of the convention, is justified in itself. Ratification without implementation is irresponsible, and it is important to monitor implementation.

In my opinion, the Delegation should focus on future-related issues. Even though it is important to monitor and follow the realisation of fundamental and human rights, Finland already has the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice of the Government for this purpose with broader mandates and better resources, and they also have the constitutional

obligation to oversee this issue. Fundamental and human rights are not a state but a process. After we have reached one level, we are already facing new challenges. The Delegation should focus on defining what the new objectives are. At the same time, it will consider the policy for this area.

The Delegation has claimed its place even though some actors have not been able to attract sufficient attention to their issue. We have not needed to extinguish fires, but - if a metaphor from the field of fire and rescue services is allowed - we have resorted to fire control and should still improve fire safety. Now we should head towards new challenges. There is always room for improvement.





Foreword

Petri Jääskeläinen



Petri Jääskeläinen

PARLIAMENTARY OMBUDSMAN

Cooperation and new tasks

The structure of Finland's National Human Rights Institution, i.e. the entity consisting of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Human Rights Centre and its Human Rights Delegation, has already received international attention. To my knowledge, at least Norway is creating a new national human rights institution based on the Finnish model. In my opinion, our model has succeeded in combining various tasks related to the promotion and protection of fundamental and human rights and to other requirements of the Paris Principles.

This has been manifested particularly well in the preparation of the first operations strategy of Finland's National Human Rights Institution. The purpose of the strategy is to confirm common objectives of the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Centre, develop cooperation and agree on the division of tasks. The creation of the strategy has demonstrated more concretely how the different tasks of operatively independent but interlinked organisations support each other in the achievement of common objectives.

In 2013 the Parliament adopted acts for ratifying the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT) on the national level and for appointing the Ombudsman as the national monitoring body in accordance with the Protocol. The Protocol has created a

mechanism under which the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) and national monitoring bodies conduct inspections in establishments subject to the jurisdiction of state parties where persons deprived of their freedom are held. In addition to prisoners, these persons can be children, old people, psychiatric patients, foreigners or mentally disabled persons who have been placed in various institutions or housing units.

The role as the national monitoring body is again a new addition to the Ombudsman's post description and selection of means, which have turned increasingly diverse. The new forms of action associated with this role, especially the use of external experts on inspection visits, bring added value to the monitoring of the treatment of persons deprived of their freedom, which has traditionally been one of the Ombudsman's responsibilities. The role as the national monitoring body also supports and further strengthens the various tasks of Finland's National Human Rights Institution.

New responsibilities are also already on the horizon: the working group responsible for preparing the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has suggested that Finland's National Human Rights Institution should function as the structure established in accordance with the

Convention to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the Convention.

I think that the National Human Rights Institution is particularly suitable for functioning as the structure referred to in the Convention. The Ombudsman's duties related to complaints and inspections, including the new OPCAT-related role, and the Human Rights Centre's general tasks concerning human rights education, training and information provision are exactly the tasks that are needed for an effective implementation of the provisions of the CRPD. The Human Rights Centre's mandate also covers

purely private actors, which is required by some provisions of the Convention. On the other hand, the Human Rights Delegation and its disability division fulfil the Convention's requirements of pluralism and inclusion of disabled persons.

The institution's new and old tasks support one another, thereby strengthening the whole institution. However, a successful institutional structure and diverse tasks do not per se guarantee a good performance - this inevitably also requires adequate resources.





1

National Human Rights Institutions

1.1

Paris Principles

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) are statutory bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights. Their responsibilities, composition and methods of operation are defined in 'Paris Principles', which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993.

The Paris Principles set forth the criteria for the establishment and operation of national human rights institutions. Their drafting was initiated in Paris in 1991 at the first meeting of the International Workshop on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Two years later the Principles were adopted both by the UN Commission on Human Rights (the predecessor of the present Human Rights Council) and the UN General Assembly. The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 emphasised the importance of establishing national human rights institutions which comply with the Paris Principles.

The Paris Principles are of a general nature, giving the states the freedom to make the ultimate decision on the actual composition and mandate of such institutions. However, the principles require that the NHRIs have broad statutory mandates. Their responsibilities should include expert, advisory and reporting tasks related to the promotion and protection of human rights as well as tasks related to human rights education, training, information provision, and monitoring of international human rights commitments. The institutions may also hear complaints.

The institutions should be as independent and representative, i.e. pluralist, as possible. Independence means first and foremost that the institutions should be both administratively and financially independent of the government. Despite being financed by the state, NHRIs must be allowed to function free from any external pressure and guidance. States should also provide them with sufficient resources to ensure their independence and effective operation.

The principle of pluralism, i.e. representativeness, means that the civil society must be broadly represented in the institutions. Non-governmental organisations responsible for human rights, trade unions, religious communities, universities and certain professional groups, such as lawyers, journalists, doctors and other experts, should either be members of the institution or work in close cooperation with it. The parliament and the government could also be represented in the institution, although the government only in an advisory capacity. A document known as the Belgrade Principles establishes a framework for cooperation between the institutions and the national parliaments.

Even though the idea of national human rights institutions was conceived already after the Second World War, these institutions are relatively new actors in the international arena. During the past 20 years the number of institutions has grown constantly and the UN, in particular, has actively advocated the founding of national structures. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights supports and develops the operation of national institutions through their National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section (NIRMS).

The international society is increasingly emphasising the significance of national human rights institutions. Simultaneously the pressure on states to establish effective NHRIs has grown.

1.2

Diversity of human rights institutions

The Paris Principles set certain criteria for the operation of national human rights institutions, but in practice the institutions differ from one another due to, for example, different social, political and economic contexts. The existing institutions can be roughly divided into four categories according to their composition and mandate:

commissions, advisory committees, ombudsman institutions and human rights institutes.

Commissions are typically multi-member bodies operating mainly in the Commonwealth states, Africa and Asia Pacific. Contrary to advisory committees, which are particularly common in French-speaking countries, the commissions are usually entrusted with the powers to examine individual complaints concerning both public and private actors. They monitor and assess the actions of governments in the implementation of human rights obligations, while the mandate of advisory committees is focused on providing technical assistance and carrying out research. The mandates of both these types of institutions may also include training and information provision in the field of human rights.

Ombudsmen, like the commissions, examine individual complaints and some ombudsmen also have the power to refer a complaint to a court. In general, most ombudsmen also give recommendations and statements which are not legally binding. The ombudsmen's mandates are usually limited to individuals and entities with public authority, and they are typically appointed by the parliament.

The ombudsman institution originated in Sweden and has since spread all over the world. Ombudsmen alone do not always fulfil the requirements of pluralism or general mandate in the promotion of human rights set for national human rights institutions in the Paris Principles, unless their remits have been extended to cover the responsibilities provided for in the Principles. Contrary to the classical Scandinavian model, ombudsmen acting as human rights institutions focus not only on monitoring good governance but also on monitoring the realisation of fundamental and human rights. In Finland, the Parliamentary Ombudsman has an exceptionally strong mandate in the field of fundamental and human rights.

Human rights institutes, which are mainly found in Europe, carry out research and provide information on human rights and promote human rights education. In connection

with these tasks, they also give statements on legislative proposals and advise governments in various human rights issues. The institutes do not examine complaints. They often have a broad membership base including representatives from a wide spectrum of society, and the members oversee the activities of the experts responsible for the institutes' practical work.

1.3 Cooperation and accreditation

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) established in 1993 functions as a cooperative body of national human rights institutions. Being members of the Committee, the national institutions participate actively in the development and assessment of their own operation as well as in the establishment of new autonomous and independent institutions. In addition to mutual cooperation, the Committee seeks, for example, to strengthen the role of national human rights institutions within their home states, the UN and other international agencies.

The Paris Principles is a key document defining the ICC's operation. The Committee must support and guide national institutions to ensure that they will act in accordance with the Principles. Applicants will be reviewed in an accreditation process, which will establish whether they fulfil the criteria set for the membership of the Coordination Committee.

Members who have been granted an A status are entitled to vote in the ICC's international and regional meetings. They can also participate and take floor in the sessions of the UN Human Rights Council and other international bodies, and the documentation submitted by them are classified as UN official documents. The members who have acquired an A status will be reviewed every five years in order to ensure that they still comply with the Paris Principles as required.

If a national human rights institution does not meet all the criteria of the Paris Principles,

the ICC will grant it a B status. Such institutions have no right to vote in the ICC meetings or take the floor in the sessions of the Human Rights Council, although they are entitled to participate in the sessions.

If a national human rights institution applying for a membership is not deemed to fulfil any criterion of the Paris Principles, it will be granted a C status. It may, however, participate in the ICC meetings and working groups as an observer. Institutions with a B or a C status may apply for an A status once they deem that they fully comply with the Principles. There are currently 70 institutions with an A status, 25 with a B status and 10 with a C status.

The National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Unit of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights acts as the ICC secretariat. The Unit is responsible for investigating, together with the Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA), whether the applicant institutions comply with the Paris Principles.

The SCA meets biannually to process applications and review any changes in the status of the institutions that have already been granted one. Having completed the process, it gives a recommendation, after which the ICC's 16-member Bureau makes a final decision on membership.

Members convene annually in Geneva at a General Meeting, which is the supreme deliberative body of the ICC. The General Meeting is responsible for the Committee's program of activities, budget and any amendments to the Charter, as well as for overseeing the Bureau that implements its decisions. It also elects the Committee's Chairperson and Vice-chairperson and confirms the new members appointed by the Bureau. In addition to the General Meeting, national institutions meet every other year to discuss certain topical human rights themes. The previous annual meeting was held in Amman, Jordan, in 2012. The meeting elected Laurence Mushwana of South Africa as ICC Chairperson.

The national institutions are organised in

four regional networks (Africa, North and South America, Asia-Pacific, and Europe) which are, in accordance with the ICC rules, equally represented in the Committee's Bureau and the SCA.

The ICC Chairperson presides over the Bureau and the General Meeting. He also acts as the ICC High Representative in international meetings and conferences. The ICC also has a permanent representative in Geneva who advises members on UN procedures and maintains contacts with UN human rights actors, NGOs and states.

Finland's National Human Rights Institution prepared an accreditation application during 2013. The processing of the application will begin in October 2014.

1.4 European Network of National Human Rights Institutions

The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) has 40 members from different parts of Europe. Approximately half of the Network's members have an A status. In 2013, a permanent secretariat was established in Brussels to coordinate the Network.

The ENNHRI promotes the realisation and protection of human rights in Europe by supporting the work of the existing European institutions and by providing assistance for the establishment and accreditation of new institutions. It functions as a forum for cooperation between its members, offers training and cooperates with international and regional human rights mechanisms.

The ENNHRI is the largest regional group within the ICC. Compared to the other continents, Europe has the largest number of inter-state mechanisms protecting fundamental and human rights: the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization

for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) all have institutions focusing on fundamental and human rights issues.

The broad-based European human rights system is also manifested in the diversity of national human rights structures since national commissions, advisory committees, research institutes and ombudsman institutions can all be found in Europe. Furthermore, several European states have already previously established institutions for promoting and/or protecting certain human rights in accordance with EU directives or UN human rights conventions, such as equality and data protection bodies and offices of the ombudsman for children.

Following the Paris Principles which now have an established status and require that national human rights institutions should have a broad mandate, the need to establish national human rights institutions that can achieve an A status has also grown in Europe. Several European states consider themselves as active promoters of human rights, and thus they want to show that they fully comply with the Principles.

1.5 Finland's National Human Rights Institution

The objective of establishing the Human Rights Centre and appointing its Delegation was to create a structure in Finland which, together with the statutory duties of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, complies with the criteria set for national human rights institutions in the Paris Principles adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Finland's National Human Rights Institution does not thus far have any statutory duties as an institution. The following task has, however, been devised: the working group that has been preparing the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has suggested that Finland's National Human Rights Institution should function as the structure referred to in Article 33(2) of the Convention entrusted with the responsibility

to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the Convention. The Government intends to propose a bill for the ratification of the Convention during its current term.

1.5.1 HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

The Human Rights Centre (HRC) was established through an act which entered into force on 1 January 2012 (Act on the Amendment of the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act, Act 535/2011 of 20 May 2011). The Centre started to operate in spring 2012 when its Director and two experts assumed their posts.

The HRC operates autonomously and independently, although it is administratively part of the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman where it is located. The Ombudsman appoints the Centre's Director for a four-year term after having received a statement on the matter from the Parliament's Constitutional Law Committee. The HRC also has a Delegation for which the Parliamentary Ombudsman appoints 20 to 40 members for a four-year term at a time after having first heard the Centre's Director. The HRC's Director acts as the Chair of the Delegation.

According to the law, the HRC has the following tasks:

- to promote information provision, training, education and research on fundamental and human rights,
- to draft reports on the implementation of fundamental and human rights,
- to take initiatives and give statements for the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights,
- to participate in European and international cooperation related to the promotion and protection of fundamental and human rights and
- to perform other similar tasks associated with the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights.

The Centre does not handle complaints or other individual cases.

1.5.2 HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION

The Human Rights Delegation was appointed through a decision made by the Parliamentary Ombudsman on 29 March 2012, and it convened for the first time on 26 April 2012. The HRC's Director acts as the Delegation's Chair.

According to the law, the Human Rights Delegation has the following tasks:

- to function as a national cooperative body for fundamental and human rights actors,
- to deal with fundamental and human rights issues of a far-reaching significance and principal importance, and
- to yearly approve the HRC's plan of action and annual report.

1.5.3 PARLIAMENTARY OMBUDSMAN

The duties of the Ombudsman are defined in the Constitution of Finland and in the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act. The Ombudsman oversees that the authorities and civil servants obey the law and fulfil their obligations. The Ombudsman's oversight also covers other actors entrusted with public authority.

As part of his duties, the Ombudsman pays particular attention to the realisation of fundamental and human rights. He also has the special responsibility to monitor how the police uses coercive telecommunication measures and covert activities. At the Parliament's request he also oversees that the rights of children are realised.

The Ombudsman supervises legality primarily by examining complaints submitted to him. He may also address drawbacks on his own initiative. Furthermore, the Ombudsman carries out inspections at offices and institutions,

in particular at prisons, military garrisons and other closed institutions. This allows him to oversee how prisoners, persons closed in institutions, conscripts and peace-keeping personnel are treated.

1.5.4 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION AND THE INSTITUTION'S STRATEGY

The preparation of an application for accreditation of Finland's National Human Rights Institution began in 2013. The written application (statement of compliance) will describe, in accordance with the Paris Principles and the ICC's general comments, the statutory basis of the National Human Rights Institution and the implementation of each task in practice through examples so as to allow the ICC to make a reliable assessment on the effectiveness of operation on the basis of the application.

Both parts of Finland's National Human Rights Institution have their specific responsibilities and own methods of operation. Last year they also started, along with the accreditation application, to work on a first joint operations strategy of Finland's National Human Rights Institution. The purpose of the strategy is to confirm common objectives, develop cooperation and agree on the division of tasks between the actors in order to ensure that these common objectives will be achieved.

During the strategy process, the actors identified interfaces between their tasks and methods of operation and mapped how the operatively independent but interlinked organisations could benefit from each other's competencies.

The processing of Finland's accreditation application will begin at the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the International Coordination Committee of National Human Rights Institutions at the end of October 2014.

2

Human Rights Centre's Operation in 2013

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES the HRC's activities in 2013 in relation to its statutory tasks. The tasks and activities are also reflected against the requirements set forth in the Paris Principles and in the HRC's plan of action adopted by the Human Rights Delegation. The first plan of action for 2012 and 2013 was drafted for the Centre shortly after it assumed its office in spring 2012. The plan of action is annexed to this report and the Human Rights Centre Annual Report 2012 is available in an electronic format on the Centre's web page.

According to the Government Bill on the establishment of the Human Rights Centre (205/2010), the HRC annual report is to be submitted to relevant parliamentary committees for their information. The first annual report was submitted to the Constitutional Law Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee for their information, and the former discussed the report in its session on 25 September 2013. The annual report was also available for any interested Member of Parliament. The HRC's activities are also discussed briefly in the annual report of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, which is submitted to the Parliament and discussed both in the Constitutional Law Committee and in the Parliament's plenary session.

2.1 Promotion of information provision, training, education and research

One of the most important statutory tasks of the Human Rights Centre is to promote information provision, training, education and research on fundamental and human rights as well as cooperation in these issues.

According to the Paris Principles, national human rights institutions should widely disseminate information on human rights and take every possible effort to combat discrimination. In particular, the Principles emphasise work against racism. The institutions' tasks should include assisting in the formulation of pro-

grammes for the teaching of and research into human rights and taking part in their execution.

The HRC's information provision activities are also linked with its international cooperation. The Government Bill (205/2010) discusses the social effects of the establishment of the HRC. According to the Bill, "the Centre would distribute information on the fundamental and human rights situation in Finland through participating in the international activities of national human rights institutions in European and international contexts and bring new human rights knowledge to Finland by following the implementation of human rights obligations in accordance with international standards at international bodies". The government proposal further states that the HRC could set up and maintain an information bank on fundamental and human rights.

It was decided in the plan of action that the Centre will examine the possibilities of establishing and maintaining a fundamental and human rights portal as well as of participating in different social media activities, organise events for invited guests and general public on important human rights themes, map actors involved in research on fundamental and human rights and their ongoing projects, and use this survey as a basis for discussing development needs with stakeholders.

This section describes how the HRC has attended to the information provision, training and research tasks during the past year. The final part of the report lists a number of topical fundamental and human rights events on which the HRC, among other things, provided information during 2013.

2.1.1 WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

The HRC has a website for implementing the information provision task (www.ihmisoikeuskeskus.fi), and it also actively uses Facebook for this purpose. Both the website and the Facebook page were

opened already in autumn 2012, and they were developed further during 2013. The HRC has more than 700 followers on Facebook. Communicating information through Facebook is fast in accordance with the principles of social media. The HRC website includes basic information on the HRC and its Delegation as well as reports and opinions published by the HRC. It also contains links to the web pages of other human rights actors and to material and documents produced by them. The establishment of a comprehensive fundamental and human rights portal or information bank is not feasible with the HRC's current resources.

The HRC has actively distributed topical material on fundamental and human rights on its Facebook page, including both domestic and international material on these rights, information on events, etc.

2.1.2 ARTICLES

In 2013 the HRC produced two comprehensive articles for a handbook on human rights published in Finnish by Tietosanoma. Sirpa Rautio's article dealt with the Human Rights Centre, while the article co-authored by Kristiina Kouros and Kristiina Vainio examined human rights and business. In addition to these themes, the HRC drafted on request or offered for publication a few newspaper articles on human rights education.

2.1.3 EVENTS

Events are an important way of providing information and training on topical fundamental and human rights themes. The HRC plans and

organises events often together with other human rights actors. In 2013 the following events, for example, were organised for general public:

- Regional conference on the Istanbul Convention - from the signature to ratification: exchange of experiences and practices
- Expert workshop on fundamental and human rights indicators in Finland
- Seminar on the system of collective complaints under the European Social Charter
- Presentation on the Human Rights Centre at the Parliament's Visitor's Centre
- Violence against women and domestic violence as human rights violations - What new will the Istanbul Convention bring?
- Sexual and gender minorities at school, in work life and as service users - What new does the study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights reveal?
- International seminar - torture as a global challenge

Along with the events for general public, the HRC received, for example, a large number of visitor groups from various educational institutions. The HRC did not only present its activities to visitors, but also disseminated general information on fundamental and human rights and often discussed certain themes more thoroughly in accordance with the groups' wishes.

Even though the HRC does not handle complaints or any other individual cases, private individuals contacted the Centre and asked for help dozens of times during 2013. The HRC responds to all contacts and seeks to refer people to the appropriate authorities.

In 2013 the HRC provided information on the decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights concerning Finland and tried to increase awareness of international human rights mechanisms and their case law.

2.1.4

TRAINING AND LECTURES

In addition to the baseline study on human rights education to be discussed in the following section, the HRC also offered actual human rights training. In 2013, the HRC trained the personnel of Finnish export credit agencies (Finnvera, Finnpartnership and Finnfund) and civil servants at the ministries on issues related to business and human rights. The HRC has also given several addresses at events organised by the public administration, universities and various organisations, such as a conference by Zonta women in Tampere, Ahtisaari days in Kuopio and a seminar on war crimes organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Erik Castrén Institute of International Law and Human Rights. The demand for HRC's training and lectures exceeds the Centre's current resources.

In 2013 the HRC's own events and its addresses at other events reached more than 1500 people.

2.1.5

RESEARCH

The HRC's resources are currently not adequate for pursuing research on its own. The Centre did, however, have preliminary discussions on the development of research activities with the members of the Human Rights Delegation who represent various research bodies, but the planning of these activities was postponed to the following year.

2.2

Reports on the implementation of fundamental and human rights

One of the HRC's tasks is to draft reports on the implementation of fundamental and human rights. The Government Bill states that the Centre will decide independently on the extent and schedule of report drafting as well as on the topics.

According to the Paris Principles, human rights institutions should prepare both general and more specific reports on the national human rights situation.

In the plan of action, the HRC undertook to carry out a comprehensive baseline study on the implementation of human rights education and training in Finland.

2.2.1

BASELINE STUDY ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Human rights education and training are crucial requirements for the development of human rights awareness and ultimately for the realisation of human rights. The right to human rights education is a human right as such, which the state is obliged to implement. In 2011, the UN member states unanimously adopted a Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training which expressly provides for this right. In Finland, the importance of human rights education and training had already been recognised but nevertheless, it was omitted from the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights (2012-2013).

Immediately after its establishment the HRC started, under its mandate to promote human rights education, an investigation of the implementation of human rights training in the Finnish school system. The first national baseline study on human rights education was mainly carried out during 2013 and published at the beginning of 2014. It was conducted in

cooperation with a large number of experts in different education sectors and human rights education.

It may be concluded from the study that the value basis and target-setting of the Finnish education system create rather a good basis for implementing human rights education and training. However, legislation and political and administrative guidance do not sufficiently guarantee a systematic implementation of training so that it would reach everybody and would meet the international quality standards. The implementation of human rights education and training depends too much on the interests and activeness of individual teachers, educators and education providers in this field. The fact that human rights are not always taught as norms of international law is also a clear shortcoming, and thus people may not understand their binding nature. There were also significant shortcomings in teacher training and in the continuing education for civil and public servants, in particular.

Based on the results of the study, the Human Rights Delegation adopted in December 2013 seven general recommendations for promoting human rights education and training in Finland. The Delegation recommends that human rights education should be included in all forms of education and training. It also requests the Government to draft a separate national action plan on human rights education. The action plan should define general and education sector-specific objectives, measures and responsible bodies as well as content objectives, follow-up and indicators for human rights education and training.

The HRC's baseline study on the implementation of human rights education and training in Finland is the first national baseline study on this topic.

2.3

Initiatives and statements

One of the HRC's tasks is to take initiatives and give statements for the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights. According to the Government Bill on the establishment of the Human Rights Centre (205/2010), the Centre could, for example, bring a general problem or an individual issue concerning a certain population group in the field of fundamental and human rights to the attention of the Parliament and the Government as well as to the attention of municipalities, other public servants or private actors. The HRC may also give its opinion on legislative proposals central to the realisation of fundamental and human rights.

The Paris Principles emphasise initiatives, statements, comments, opinions and technical assistance by national human rights institutions to the government, national parliament and other actors involved in the protection and implementation of human rights.

2.3.1

STATEMENTS AND OPINIONS

The following are examples of the statements and opinions given by the HRC in 2013:

- Opinion on democracy and human rights education in teacher training to the Ministry of Education and Culture
- Statement on the HRC annual report to the Constitutional Law Committee
- Statement on legislative proposals LA 27/2012 (amendment of the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access) and 28/2012 (amendment of the Criminal Act in respect of the right of access)

Furthermore, the Human Rights Delegation drafted an opinion on the amendment process of the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act in June 2013.

2.3.2

STATEMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The HRC participates in the handling of government reports to be submitted to judicial review bodies that monitor the implementation of international human rights conventions by giving statements directly to international bodies at the different stages of reporting. At the request of committees, statements are also given, to the extent possible, on inquiries, drafts of general comments and other documents being prepared. The statements given to international bodies will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.4

Participation in European and international cooperation

According to the law, the Human Rights Centre shall participate in European and international cooperation related to the promotion and protection of fundamental and human rights. The Government Bill states that in this task the HRC generally represents Finland's National Human Rights Institution.

The main emphasis is given to cooperation where other national human rights institutions are also involved. The most important international actors in respect of the HRC are the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the UN Human Rights Council, the treaty monitoring bodies and the Council of Europe.

International cooperation is also closely related to information provision activities: according to the Government Bill, "the Centre would distribute information on the fundamental and human rights situation in Finland through participating in the international activities of national human rights institutions in European and international contexts and bring new human rights knowledge to Finland by following the implementation of human rights obliga-

tions in accordance with international standards at international bodies".

In the plan of action, the HRC committed itself to international cooperation within networks of human rights institutions, in particular, as well as to initiating the accreditation process as soon as possible after the first year of operation.

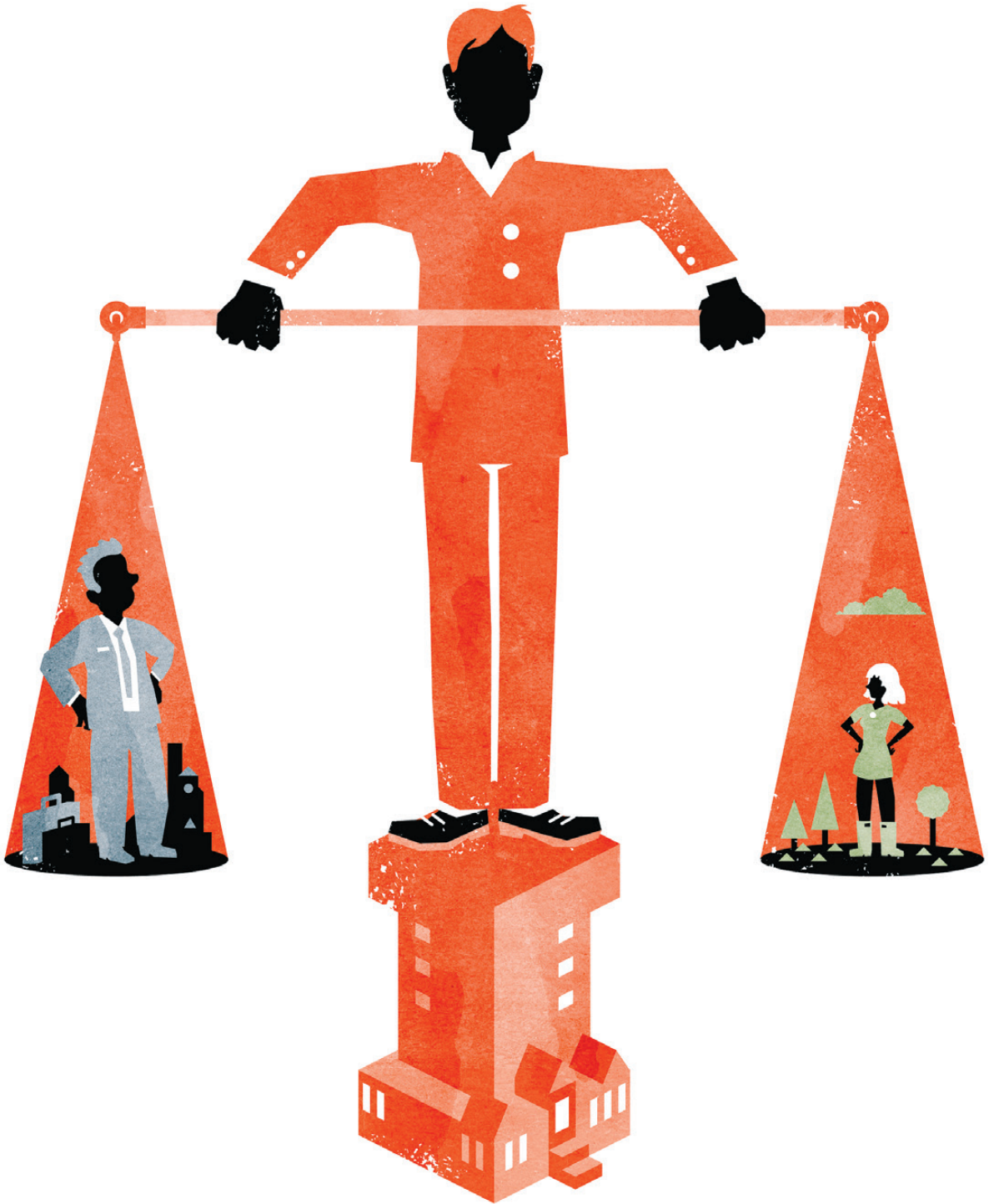
2.4.1

COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) is the HRC's closest international partner. The ENNHRI has three actual working groups under its Secretary-General based in Brussels: a Legal Working Group (LGW), a Disability Working Group involved in the implementation of the CRPD (CRPD-WG) and an Asylum and Migration Working Group. In addition, the ENNHRI has established less formal networks which deal with issues such as corporate human rights responsibility, the rights of the elderly and the safeguarding of economic, social and cultural rights when governments take saving measures. The working groups and networks meet once or twice a year, partly via telephone or other virtual connections. Between the meetings they draft statements on topical issues through email communication and participate, for example, in the meetings of the Council of Europe working groups.

Professor Alan Miller from Scotland's Human Rights Commission acted as the ENNHRI Chair in 2013 and Debbie Kohner as its Secretary-General in Brussels.

Mutual cooperation with the human rights institutions of other countries has been beneficial to the HRC's work in its initial stages. The HRC has participated in the activities of all the other working groups except that of the asylum and migration working group.



In 2013 the HRC participated in the activities of the ENNHRI's working groups and discussed topical human rights issues with experts from various institutions. The HRC also received support for preparing the accreditation application.

2.5 Other tasks associated with the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights

The HRC's duties also include other tasks which are associated with the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights but are not explicitly stated in the statutory tasks. According to the Government Bill, the most important one of these would be to follow independently that Finland complies with international human rights conventions, implements the recommendations and decisions given by international monitoring bodies and enforces the judgements by the European Court of Human Rights.

Promoting the ratification and implementation of international human rights conventions is also one of the important responsibilities of human rights institutions under the Paris Principles.

The HRC's plan of action for 2012 and 2013 emphasises, for example, that the Centre should monitor the execution of the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights and the Government Report on Human Rights Policy as well as the ratification and implementation of international conventions.

2.5.1 MONITORING THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON FUNDAMENTAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Government adopted the first National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights

for 2012 and 2013 on 22 March 2012. A 'panel of human rights actors', which participated in the drafting and monitoring of the plan, published its statement and ten recommendations for the implementation of the action plan in January 2014.

For instance, the panel emphasised that the recommendations of international treaty monitoring bodies should be implemented without any delay and stated that attention should be paid to the realisation of non-discrimination and the rights of people and groups vulnerable to discrimination. The children's rights and gender equality approach should be mainstreamed in all activities of the authorities. The panel also stressed that the independence of ombudsmen appointed for specific topics from the government and their autonomous status are key requirements for a credible follow-up and monitoring of human rights. The panel noted that ways of improving the operating conditions of the ombudsmen and the Human Rights Centre should be examined when developing the overall architecture for promoting and monitoring human rights.

The HRC was involved in the work of the panel of human rights actors and in its final statement on the implementation of the action plan.

2.5.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Finland has signed nearly all international human rights conventions and their optional protocols immediately after their adoption, but the ratification (national implementation) of several documents has been delayed, in some cases even by several years. This delay, partly caused by the lack of resources and partly by delays

in the preparation of legislative amendments, is by no means acceptable. In future, Finland should seek to ratify conventions more swiftly. This would allow us to benefit to the fullest from the work of the treaty monitoring bodies which develop the interpretation of the content of the conventions.

In February 2013 the Parliament ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which allows for individual complaints and communications (Government Bill 74/2012). The Protocol entered into force in Finland on 30 April 2014.

In February 2013 the Parliament also ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Government Bill 182/2012). The instrument of ratification will be deposited at the UN in spring 2014. This 'OPCAT Protocol' will establish a national preventive mechanism where the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) and national monitoring bodies will conduct inspections at places within the jurisdiction of state parties where persons deprived of their liberty are held. In Finland this duty will be assigned to the Ombudsman.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has promised to submit the following UN conventions and protocols that have already been signed to a parliamentary hearing during the current term of the Government (i.e. in practice during 2014): the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol allowing individual complaints (CRPD), the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED), and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing a complaint procedure.

As regards the conventions signed within the Council of Europe, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has stated that it will submit the following to a parliamentary hearing: the Istanbul Convention, i.e. the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and

Domestic Violence, and the fifteenth and sixteenth protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989) has still not been ratified regardless of the fact that its ratification is included in the objectives of the Government Programme.

Neither has the UN Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families been ratified. This Convention has mainly been ratified by states within developing countries. No EU country has ratified the Convention despite strong lobbying by human rights organisations.

The HRC has, for its part, tried to promote the ratification and implementation of the conventions by participating in working groups as an expert, by giving statements on draft texts related to ratification and by organising events on the themes of the conventions.

In 2013 the HRC offered its expertise for the preparation of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons.

2.5.3 PERIODIC REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

States are obliged to provide periodic reports on the implementation of human rights conventions to the committees monitoring their implementation. The periods for submitting reports vary from one to five years or are imposed on a case-by-case basis. As part of the periodic reporting, member states participate in hearing events organised by the monitoring committees where significant problems related to the fields covered by the reports are discussed orally. The committees give recommendations

to the member states and monitor the implementation of their earlier recommendations.

In May 2013, Finland provided a response to additional questions ('List of Issues') presented by the UN Human Rights Committee about Finland's report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Committee gave its conclusions on the report to Finland in July 2013.

In August, the Government submitted a report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in respect of the Committee's conclusions of 2012 on the implementation of chapters 12 (autonomy of the Sámi people), 13 (land rights of the Sámi people) and 16 (integration of immigrants, ethnic profiling).

The Government also provided a supplement to Finland's 7th report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women towards the end of 2013.

In respect of the Council of Europe human rights conventions, Finland submitted a report only to the European Committee of Social Rights in 2013, which it has done every year. During the current year no report was submitted or recommendations/conclusions received from the treaty monitoring bodies in respect of other conventions.

In addition to the treaty monitoring bodies, UN member states participate in the Universal Periodic Review within the Human Rights Council.

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published its fourth country report on Finland, completed with recommendations, on 9 July. The report is based on the Commission's visit to Finland between 27 February and 2 March 2012.

In accordance with its Statute, ECRI carries out country-by-country monitoring, analyses the situation of racism and intolerance in each member state and makes proposals and sug-

gestions on how the states could address the problems identified. ECRI's members have recognised expertise in dealing with issues related to racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. They act independently and impartially in fulfilling their mandate.

The fourth round country-by-country reports assessed the extent to which states have followed ECRI's main recommendations from previous reports. They also evaluate more broadly the implementation of anti-racism and anti-intolerance policies and measures. The reports further include an analysis of current developments in the country in question. ECRI requests priority implementation for a number of specific recommendations made in the new report, and it will conduct an interim follow-up concerning these specific recommendations within two years of the publication of the report.

In its fourth country report on Finland ECRI presented 49 recommendations for promoting the realisation of the rights of ethnic minorities.

In 2013 the HRC submitted information to the UN and CoE committees at different stages of reporting in respect of, for example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (before a preliminary hearing at the committee, before hearing the government, and in connection with any interim submission). The HRC informed a large number of actors on the possibility of participating in the reporting through the members of the Human Rights Delegation and distributed the recommendations presented by the committees on its website and Facebook page. The HRC also organised events on the recommendations given in respect of different conventions.

3

Human Rights Delegation's Operation in 2013

THE HRC'S DELEGATION functions as a national cooperative body of fundamental and human rights actors, deals with fundamental and human rights issues of a far-reaching significance and principal importance and yearly approves the HRC's plan of action and annual report. The matters dealt by the Delegation are in practice largely dictated by its own discussions and its working committee's preparatory work.

The Government Bill states that the purpose of setting up the Delegation is to comply with the requirement of the Paris Principles for a wide cooperation network or pluralist composition of national human rights institutions. Upon appointing the Delegation, the Parliamentary Ombudsman paid special attention to ensuring diverse expertise and representativeness and to the fact that the members act in the field of fundamental and human rights. In 2013, the Delegation consisted of 39 members appointed by the Parliamentary Ombudsman (Astrid Thors, one of the originally appointed members, submitted her request for resignation after she had been appointed as OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities).

The HRC's Director acts as the Chair of the Delegation. The Delegation selected Pentti Arajärvi as its Vice-chair from among its members. His membership had been suggested by the Finnish Central Union for Child Welfare.

In the plan of action, the Delegation undertook to discuss, in addition to the HRC's plan of action, Finland's second periodic report to the UN Human Rights Council (UPR) and the national fundamental and human rights structures as well as to hear experts on topical matters. The Delegation also intended to pursue a general discussion on its own objectives and methods of operation and to draft a plan of action for itself.

In 2013 the Human Rights Delegation met four times: in June, September, November and December.

The Delegation's first meeting of the year approved the HRC's previous annual report, which provides an account of the key issues re-

lated to the HRC's establishment and start-up of operations. The Delegation found the content of the report satisfactory, but several members expressed the wish that the summary should also be translated into minority languages and the sign language. The meeting also approved the Delegation's opinion on the amendment of the Non-Discrimination Act.

In addition to the matters to be decided, the Chair disclosed that the preparation of a strategy for the national human rights institution and an accreditation application had been started and discussed the HRC's financial prospects on the basis of the budget proposal.

Finally, Senior Legal Adviser Krista Oinonen from the Unit for Human Rights Courts and Conventions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs gave an introduction on the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and on the hearing of Finland at the Human Rights Committee monitoring compliance with the ICCPR. The Delegation members also received a copy of Finland's responses to the 'List of Issues' document submitted by the Committee.

In its second meeting, the Delegation discussed and approved the HRC's plan of action for 2014. The meeting also decided that requests, petitions, letters and other similar documents submitted to the Human Rights Delegation by private individuals will from now on be handled at the Human Rights Delegation's working committee, which will decide whether a letter requires a more substantial discussion at the Delegation.

Preliminary results of the HRC's baseline study on human rights education and training were presented at the meeting. The Delegation was divided into working groups to deliberate recommendations that it could give in connection with the baseline study.

The third meeting of the year focused on the baseline study on human rights education and training and the Delegation discussed the recommendations for human rights education in more detail.

The Delegation members who participated in the fourth meeting accepted the recommendations for human rights education. The meeting also decided that the human rights education and training division will continue to operate in 2014 and that a division responsible for monitoring the implementation of fundamental and human rights and a planning group for establishing a disability division will start their work at the beginning of the same year. The planning group was appointed for the period of 1 January to 30 June 2014. The Delegation approved the members of the planning group, divisions and working committee for 2014. The meeting also discussed the Centre's annual report for 2013 as well as preparations for its blog and newsletter.

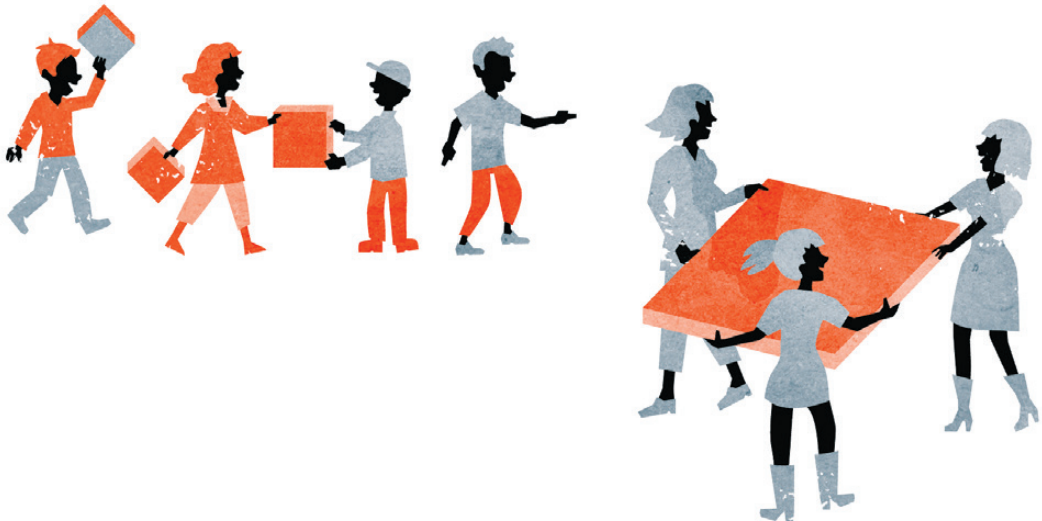
Chair of the panel of human rights actors Liisa Murto presented the panel's upcoming statement on the implementation of the National Action Programme on Fundamental and Human Rights and gave an overview of the panel's activities during the reporting period. The Delegation expressed a wish that the upcoming action programme on fundamental and human rights should be more closely linked with the Government Programme, which would enable implementation of more future-oriented

projects for the promotion of fundamental and human rights.

At the end of the meeting, Human Rights Ambassador Rauno Merisaari gave the Delegation a situation overview of the preparation process and content of the Government Report on Human Rights Policy. After the overview, the Delegation discussed the report and the issues that it would like to be taken into account.

The working committee convened five times during the year to prepare the Delegation's meetings. The human rights education and training division functioned as a steering group for the baseline study on human rights education and training and prepared action proposals and recommendations at its meetings and via electronic communications.

The number of divisions at the Human Rights Delegation was increased at the end of 2013. The aim is to enhance operations, enable a more focused follow-up of developments in different fields and to promote the realisation of rights more actively.





4

Cooperation with Other Fundamental and Human Rights Actors

THE HRC CONSTANTLY cooperates with actors operating in the field of fundamental and human rights. The Government Network of Fundamental and Human Rights Contact Persons, the Unit of Democracy and Language Affairs at the Ministry of Justice and the Human Rights Units (OIK/40 and POL/40) at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as well as the Advisory Board on International Human Rights Affairs appointed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs are key partners among the authorities.

In December 2013 the HRC decided, on the Delegation's initiative, to convene a first meeting of the Delegation's public authority members responsible for monitoring fundamental and human rights: the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice of the Government, the Ombudsman for Children, the Ombudsman for Equality, the Ombudsman for Data Protection and the Ombudsman for Minorities. These 'guardians of fundamental and human rights' form an unofficial group which intends to meet a couple of times a year or more frequently, if necessary.

Principles known as the Belgrade Principles provide a framework for cooperation between national human rights institutions and national parliaments (annexed to this report). The HRC's cooperation with the Parliament is being developed and so far the closest partners have been the Constitutional Law Committee, the Parliament's Human Rights Group and the Unit for International Affairs. The HRC has occasionally participated in the events coordinated by the unit and given presentations on Finland's human rights situation and on structures for promoting and protecting fundamental and human rights.

The HRC also cooperates with various organisations, experts and researchers in the field of fundamental and human rights. Experts from different organisations and universities, for example, are represented both at the Delegation and at the divisions appointed by it.

Forms of cooperation include various events, lectures and visits.



5

Fundamental and Human Rights Events

THIS SECTION PROVIDES information about international human rights convention projects that were pending in 2013 as well as about selected decisions by judicial review bodies that are important from Finland's point of view. It also includes examples of fundamental and human rights events. The HRC has provided information on many of the below-listed fundamental and human rights events over the year.

5.1 Pending international human rights convention projects

In 2013 there were new projects and initiatives related to conventions pending at the international organisations, such as projects concerning the rights of the elderly both at the Council of Europe and the UN.

Actual negotiations are under way in respect of the following conventions:

Negotiations on the **accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights** were completed in April 2013. At the time of writing this report, the draft accession treaty was being handled at the Court of Justice of the European Union, which will issue a statement on the draft.

The **European Convention against the Illegal Trade of Human Organs** should be adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2014. After this, a decision will be made on whether to draft an additional protocol on the trade of tissues and cells.

A new additional protocol concerning the **protection of human rights and dignity of persons with mental disorders with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment** is being drafted for the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine adopted by the Council of Europe ('Oviedo Convention').

Finland, Sweden and Norway will negotiate

together with the Sámi Parliament of each state on a **Nordic Sami Convention**, which seeks to improve the status of the Sámi as an indigenous people and to strengthen and reinforce their rights. The negotiations started in 2011 and should be completed within five years. A draft convention prepared by a joint Nordic expert group functions as a framework for the negotiations.

The HRC followed the pending convention projects during 2013 and provided information on requests for statements and other events related to the conventions.

5.2 Human rights complaints to international judicial review bodies

Human rights complaints are handled at judicial review bodies operating under the UN and the Council of Europe. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Committee on Social Rights (ECSR) operate under the Council of Europe, and four further bodies operate under the UN: the Human Rights Committee, the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Within the next few years, complaints against Finland can also be examined by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

In 2013, a total of 315 new complaints were filed against Finland at the ECHR. The Government was requested to submit a response to 21 complaints. During 2013, the ECHR rendered three judgements concerning Finland. A violation of rights was established in each of

them. In addition to the judgements, the ECHR rendered 13 decisions on complaints and 39 decisions on applications for interim measures. The Court adopted interim measures only in two cases. After the New Year, the number of pending matters was around 200.

During 2013 the ECHR rendered three judgements concerning Finland.

Between 1 November 1998 and 31 December 2012 (the ECHR was established in 1998), Finland has received 166 judgements and the handling of 93 complaints has ended in a decision or judgement following an agreement or a unilateral declaration by the Government. During its membership, Finland has received a remarkably high number of condemnatory judgements from the ECHR, i.e. 150. However, the number of condemnatory judgements has decreased during the past years, and there is no longer any significant difference between Finland and the other Nordic countries in respect of the number of these judgements.

No new collective complaints were filed against Finland at the European Committee on Social Rights in 2013. During 2013, the Committee published two decisions concerning Finland where a violation was established. The Committee has handled altogether 4 complaints filed against Finland (three violations have been established). One complaint filed in 2012 is still pending at the Committee.

There were eight complaints pending against Finland at the UN Committee against Torture in 2013 and one complaint at the Committee on Human Rights. So far 33 complaints in total have been filed against Finland at the UN Committee on Human Rights, and the Committee has taken a decision in 14 cases. A violation was established in five cases, while no violation was established in nine cases.

5.3 Events and projects

5.3.1 COUNCIL OF STATE

In June 2013, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs published its first human rights strategy. The strategy and its related action plan have two objectives: to better mainstream human rights in all activities of the Foreign Ministry and to increase the effectiveness of Finland's international human rights activities by defining cross-cutting objectives and key projects for the human rights policy.

The Council of State has also defined a National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights for 2012 and 2013, which is based on the Government Programme. In 2013 it was also implementing other programmes closely related to human rights, such as Finland's Disability Policy Programme (2010-2015), the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality (2010-2015) and Finland's National Policy on Roma, which was adopted in 2009.

At the beginning of September, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs appointed Rauno Merisaari as Human Rights Ambassador to replace his predecessor Ann-Marie Nyroos.

5.3.2 PARLIAMENT

During the year, the Parliament has discussed numerous issues related to fundamental and human rights, such as economic problems in Europe and in Finland, the reform of service structures in social welfare and health care and the reform to restructure municipalities. The Parliament also considered, for example, the working conditions of foreign berry pickers in Finland and the situation in Syria. Furthermore, the Parliament also dealt with enacting an act to make harassment punishable and with amend-

ing the provisions concerning violations against the freedom of expression in order to further strengthen this freedom.

On 10e October, the Parliament's plenary session elected member of parliament Jussi Halla-aho (Finns Party) as deputy member of Finland's delegation at the Council of Europe. The election received an exceptional amount of criticism among the MPs as some of them deemed that Mr. Halla-aho, being sentenced in 2012 for the breach of religious peace and aggravated incitement against an ethnic group, was unsuitable for a position at an organisation promoting human rights and tolerance.

5.3.3 EUROPEAN UNION

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union became legally binding. The Charter sets out fundamental rights, such as the freedom of expression and the protection of personal data, which reflect Europe's common values and its constitutional heritage. The Charter is addressed, first and foremost, to the EU institutions. It complements national systems and does not replace them. Member states are subject to their own constitutional systems and to the fundamental rights set out in these. Member states are only bound by the Charter when they implement EU policies and law on the national level.

The Commission also has a strategy adopted in 2010 to ensure that the Charter is implemented effectively. It also drafted a 'Fundamental Rights Check List' to facilitate the evaluation of the impacts of its legislative proposals on fundamental rights.

The European Union Courts (Court of Justice, General Court and Civil Service Tribunal) increasingly refer to the Charter in the reasoning of their decisions. In 2011, the number of decisions quoting the Charter was 43 and in 2012 already 87. In 2013, the EU Courts quoted

the Charter in 114 decisions, which is almost three times the number of cases in 2011.

Likewise, national courts also increasingly refer to the Charter when presenting requests for preliminary rulings to the Court of Justice. In 2012, such requests rose by 65% as compared to 2011, from 27 to 41. In 2013 the number of referrals remained at 41, the same as in 2012.

The Åkerberg Fransson judgement rendered by the Grand Chamber of the Court of Justice on 26 February 2013 clarified the applicability of the Charter when implementing EU law on the national level. The Court ruled that the *ne bis in idem* principle does not preclude a member state from imposing successively, for the same act, i.e. for tax evasion in this case, a tax penalty and a criminal penalty in so far as the tax penalty is not criminal in nature.

In 2013, the Commission also initiated infringement procedures against member states where the fundamental rights set out in the Charter had a significance. For example, the Commission confirmed at the end of an infringement procedure that Austria's data protection authority is no longer part of the Federal Chancellery but has its own budget and staff and is thus independent. In March 2013 Hungary took measures to comply with the Court's judgement on the forced early retirement of 274 judges (MEMO/12/832).

The Commission sent an inquiry to Finland on 21 January 2013 and noted that Finland's national legislation is not consistent with the Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. According to the Commission's view, Finland does not have any organisation whose mandate would expressly include providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints about discrimination referred to in Article 13 of the Directive when said discrimination involves discrimination in work life.

Having examined Finland's response the Commission deemed that the matter had not been addressed and initiated an infringement

procedure. Finland contested the formal notice sent on 20 June, after which the Commission gave its reasoned opinion on the matter on 21 November (2013/2084).

The Commission's report on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights also reveals that there is a high interest among citizens in fundamental rights issues. In 2013 the issues most frequently raised by citizens in their correspondence with Europe Direct Contact Centres were free movement and residence (48% of the total number of enquiries), consumer rights issues (12%), judicial cooperation (11%), questions related to citizenship (10%), anti-discrimination and social rights (5%) and data protection (4%).

In relation to the theme 'Business and human rights', the EU Commission suggested in 2013 that the annual reports of companies should include an account with information on environmental protection, social matters for employees, respect for human rights and anti-corruption and anti-bribery measures. The Government sent a communication on the matter to the Parliament on 26 June 2013.

In its Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility (2011-2014), the EU Commission wished that member states would draft national plans for implementing the UN Principles on Human Rights and Business. The plans were expected to be submitted during 2013. In Finland the deadline for the working group appointed by the Council of State was set at the end of March 2014.

Head of Unit Fundamental Rights in the Directorate-General Justice Salla Saastamoinen of Finland received a close Finnish colleague when Miranda Vuolasranta was appointed as National Expert in anti-discrimination work at

the Commission. She has previously worked as Finland's National Expert at the Council of Europe and as Senior Officer responsible for international Roma issues at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Ms. Vuolasranta's new position belongs to the EU Commission's Non-discrimination Policies Unit of the Directorate-General Justice.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The objective of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, which was established in March 2007, is to provide assistance and expertise on fundamental rights both to the EU institutions and to the EU member states. The Agency collects and distributes information on fundamental rights in fields falling within the EU's mandate, participates in developing standards, drafts statements and produces various studies and reports. In 2013 it published studies and reports on the following topics:

- Inequalities and multiple discrimination in access to and quality of healthcare
- Fundamental rights at Europe's southern sea borders
- Legal capacity of persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with mental health problems
- European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey
- EU solidarity and Frontex: fundamental rights challenges
- Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States
- Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary

The annual conference of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights focused on hate crimes.

Deputy Parliamentary Ombudsman Maija Sakslin continued as the Chair of the Agency's Executive Board in 2013.

5.3.4 UNITED NATIONS

The UN's human rights activities are concentrated in Geneva, which houses the meeting rooms for the Human Rights Council and treaty monitoring bodies as well as most premises of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The second term of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay will end in 2014.

The UN Human Rights Council (Commission on Human Rights till 2006) consists of 47 representatives of the UN member states who are elected for a three-year term at a time from among regional groups. The Council convenes each year in sessions in March, June and September which last at least ten weeks in total. The sessions held in 2013 were the 22th to 24th in sequence. The sessions handle both country-specific issues and certain themes. In 2013 the human rights situations in Iran, Syria, Mali, Myanmar and North Korea, for example, required special attention on the Council's agenda. The thematic issues that were discussed included the right of disabled persons to work, the rights of minorities, the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights and the rights of human rights defenders. The Annual Report of the Human Rights Council 2013 (A/68/53) is available on the UN website.

Between 2008 and 2011 all UN member states were in turn subjected to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council for the first time. UPR sessions are held three times a year and each session lasts for two weeks. The second country cycle began in 2012. Finland has been among the first countries to be reviewed in both cycles.

Committees monitoring the implementation of human rights treaties meet regularly every year to discuss national reports submitted by the countries that have ratified the convention concerned and/or complaints against alleged treaty violations. The committees also draft general comments on the content and interpreta-

tion of treaty provisions. In 2013, the following general comments were adopted:

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD):

- General recommendation No. 35 - Combating racist hate speech

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):

- General recommendation No. 29 - Economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution
- General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

- General comment No. 14 on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration
- General comment No. 15 on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health
- General comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights
- General comment No. 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts

Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW):

- General comment No. 2 on the rights of migrant workers in an irregular situation and members of their families

The reports submitted by Finland for handling at the above-mentioned committees were discussed in section 2.5.3.

At the beginning of December, a comprehensive Forum of Business and Human Rights was organised in Geneva for the second time. The event will take place annually. The HRC participated in the first forum in 2012. The HRC

also participated in an international seminar on human rights education, which was organised in Dublin at the same time in 2013.

Liisa Kauppinen received the UN Human Rights Prize in New York on the International Human Rights Day on 10 December.

Liisa Kauppinen, who has worked for the rights of the deaf, received the UN Human Rights Prize in New York on the International Human Rights Day on 10 December. She is the first Finn to have been granted the award. Ms. Kauppinen has acted, for example, as the Executive Director of the Finnish Association of the Deaf and as the Secretary-General of the World Federation of the Deaf. Furthermore, she has held various advisory positions at the UN. She has also worked for the promotion of the rights of women, in particular those of disabled women.

5.3.5 COUNCIL OF EUROPE

According to Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe now face a crisis unprecedented since the end of the Cold War. Serious human rights violations, including corruption, immunity from prosecution, impunity, human trafficking, racism, hate speech and discrimination, are on the rise throughout the continent. Human rights are also threatened by the impact of the economic crisis and growing inequalities.

On the other hand, the Council has already achieved significant results in several areas: the number of cases pending at the European Court of Human Rights is decreasing, the individual right to petition to the Court is being safeguarded and more focused project-based

co-operation programmes are being implemented in several member States. The accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights is also on track.

Steering Committee for Human Rights

The Steering Committee for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (CDDH) functions as one of the 26 steering committees that prepare the work of the Committee of Ministers. It is responsible for preparing decisions for developing the protection of human rights in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

In 2013, the Steering Committee for Human Rights made four recommendations:

- Recommendation 2017 on nanotechnology and its impact on public health and the environment
- Recommendation 2016 on the human rights responsibilities of Frontex
- Recommendation 2015 on young people's access to fundamental rights
- Recommendation 2010 on migration and asylum related to mounting tensions in Eastern Mediterranean

Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, whose office was instituted in 1999, is mandated to promote human rights education and awareness of the respect for human rights in general. He also provides advice for the member states and citizens and may bring shortcomings in legislation or practices to the attention of states. He acts independently and impartially in fulfilling his mandate.

In 2013 the Commissioner carried out 23 country visits and published two thematic reports. One of these, *The right to leave a country*, focuses on member states which restrict this right. The other one deals with safeguarding human rights in times of economic crisis. It includes practical guidance for implementing

measures aimed at balancing economies in a manner respecting human rights.

The Commissioner contacted the media about their handling of two cases in 2013 in which blond children were discovered to be in the custody of Roma parents. The Commissioner stated that he was appalled by the media coverage not only in the two countries in which the cases erupted, but throughout Europe. Media highlighted the ethnicity of the parents and, without investigating the matter, automatically jumped to the conclusion that the children must somehow have been taken from their real parents or ended up in their families by unlawful or unethical means.

Reform of the European Court of Human Rights

The committee dealing with the reform of the European Court of Human Rights made an open call towards the end of 2013 for information, proposals and views on the issue of the longer-term reform of the system of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights. One of the reasons for the reform is the Court's backlog.

This process follows on from the Brighton Declaration, adopted in April 2012, where the member states were invited to examine the future of the human rights convention system and the role of the Human Rights Court. The proposals and views can concern the future role of and challenges to the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights, the development of the Court, the execution procedure of the Court judgments or, for example, compensations for violations of the Convention.

The Committee will discuss the proposals in 2014 in a working group that consists of representatives of member states and external experts. The results of this process will eventually be included in a report of the Steering Committee for Human Rights, to be submitted by 15 April 2015 to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers.

In 2013, an amendment was adopted

which established a stricter criterion for admissibility (Rules of Court, rule 47). It included two key changes. First of all, a complaint must be filed using an official application form and informal applications will no longer be considered. Second, the expiry of the 6-month appeal period (calculated from the date on which the highest national court has rendered its final decision) requires that the complaint includes all the information specified in the application form with annexes. Thus it is not sufficient to submit only the application form and provide supplementary information later. Furthermore, the supplementary information may not exceed 20 pages (excluding official annexes). The amendments will enter into force at the beginning of 2014.

5.3.6

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The main annual event of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is the 10-day Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) organised every autumn in Warsaw. The meeting provides a unique platform for dialogue on human rights themes between the OSCE member states, civil society and other international organisations. The 2013 meeting discussed in depth such themes as the freedom of religion and conscience, the freedom of assembly, the rule of law, and tolerance and non-discrimination.

High Commissioner on National Minorities

Master of Laws and Member of Parliament Astrid Thors, who has also acted as a member of the Human Rights Delegation, was elected for the post of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities as of 20 August 2013. Her term of office will last for three years.

The OSCE High Commissioner on National

Minorities is an instrument of conflict prevention. The Commissioner aims to prevent and de-escalate tensions involving national minorities in the OSCE area. The Commissioner's work is characterized by quiet diplomacy and support to the cooperation between different parties. The Commissioner seeks to address tensions at the earliest possible stage. The High Commissioner on National Minorities may also, if needed, draw the attention of the OSCE participating states to particular developments that cause concern.

The tasks of the High Commissioner on National Minorities were agreed upon by the OSCE participating states in 1992. The Commissioner's office is located in The Hague in the Netherlands. Astrid Thors succeeds Knut Vollebaek of Norway as the High Commissioner on National Minorities. During the first year of her term, Ms. Thors will be assisted by her personal advisor Sirpa Rautio, who is on leave of absence from her post as the HRC's Director.

5.3.7

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

Amnesty International

Amnesty International (AI) is an international human rights organisation established in 1961 with more than three million members and supporters in over 150 countries. Amnesty seeks to make human rights known, investigate serious human rights violations and campaign against them throughout the world. The AI carries out research, follows the human rights situation in different countries and reports on and campaigns for the improvement of the situation of persons who have been subject either to serious individual or country-specific human rights violations. The organisation also focuses on human rights education. Salil Shetty of India has acted as the Director of Amnesty International since 2010.

Amnesty's long-term campaigning and lobbying can be deemed to have played a

significant role in the adoption of the International Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013. The Finnish Parliament approved the Treaty on 16 December 2013 as well as a special act according to which Finland will comply with articles 6 and 7 that are most important from the human rights perspective already before the Treaty officially enters into force. Amnesty Finland had also required Finland to reform its arms export control.

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch (HRW) originated in 1978 with the creation of Helsinki Watch, which grew from regional committees specialised in monitoring different continents into a global human rights organisation. In 1988, it adopted the name Human Rights Watch. The organisation has more than 400 staff members around the globe and is engaged in active cooperation with local human rights actors. Originally the organisation's primary focus was on civil and political rights and humanitarian law in conflicts, but over the years its activities have expanded to also cover economic, social and cultural rights and such issues as human rights and business. The organisation's reporting is inclusive both geographically and thematically. In 2013 it published, in addition to its annual report, over 70 reports concerning, for example, exploitation of migrant workers in connection with Olympic Games in Sochi, the impact of Hungary's new constitution, women's rights in the New Libya, and sexual violence against Tamils by Sri Lankan security forces.

Kenneth Roth of the United States of America has acted as the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch since 1987.

International Federation for Human Rights

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) is an international umbrella organisation for 178 human rights organisations operating in different parts of the world. It seeks to convey the message of human rights defenders

working at the grass-root level to international intergovernmental organisations in particular.

FIDH and several of its member organisations also employ 'strategic litigation' in their actions. In 2013 FIDH was involved in defending over 850 victims of human rights violations in over 110 litigations worldwide. FIDH also sued the National Security Agency of the United States of America (NSA) in France and Belgium. FIDH wants court rulings on whether the NSA violated the right to privacy of the French and Belgian citizens through collecting their information with the PRISM intelligence programme. The existence of the intelligence programme was revealed in June 2013 by technician Edward Snowden, a former employee of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the NSA.

Several of the human rights defenders acting in FIDH's member organisations are leading human rights activists in their own countries, which is why many of them are also persecuted. In 2013 Ales Bialiatski was still held in prison in Belarus and Nabeel Rajab in Bahrain. Karim Lahidji of Iranian origin was elected as Presi-

dent of the FIDH Executive Board and Antoine Bernard of France acts as the Chief Executive Officer. The Finnish League for Human Rights is FIDH's Finnish member organisation.

5.3.8 OTHER ISSUES

Dissertations on fundamental and human rights

In 2013, at least three dissertations directly related to fundamental and human rights were examined in Finland: Jari Pirjola's dissertation *Dark and bright sides of human rights - towards pragmatic evaluation* at the University of Helsinki, Outi Anttila's dissertation *Towards substantive equality? Prohibitions of sex discrimination in the age of legal pluralism* at the University of Turku, and Mikaela Heikkilä's dissertation *Coping with International Atrocities through Criminal Law - A Study into the Typical Features of International Criminality and the Reflection of these Traits in International Criminal Law* at the Åbo Akademi University.

Annexes

United Nations

A/RES/48/134

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Distr. GENERAL
20 December 1993
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH
A/RES/48/134
85th plenary meeting
20 December 1993

48/134. National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling the relevant resolutions concerning national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, notably its resolutions 41/129 of 4 December 1986 and 46/124 of 17 December 1991 and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1987/40 of 10 March 1987, 1988/72 of 10 March 1988, 1989/52 of 7 March 1989, 1990/73 of 7 March 1990, 1991/27 of 5 March 1991 and 1992/54 of 3 March 1992, and taking note of Commission resolution 1993/55 of 9 March 1993,

Emphasizing the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other international instruments for promoting respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Affirming that priority should be accorded to the development of appropriate arrangements at the national level to ensure the effective implementation of international human rights standards,

Convinced of the significant role that institutions at the national level can play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms,

Recognizing that the United Nations can play a catalytic role in assisting the development of national institutions by acting as a clearing-house for the exchange of information and experience,

Mindful in this regard of the guidelines on the structure and functioning of national and local institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/46 of 14 December 1978,

Welcoming the growing interest shown worldwide in the creation and strengthening of national institutions, expressed during the Regional Meeting for Africa of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Tunis from 2 to 6 November 1992, the Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, held at San Jose from 18 to 22 January 1993, the Regional Meeting for Asia, held at Bangkok from 29 March to 2 April 1993, the Commonwealth Workshop on National Human Rights Institutions, held at Ottawa from 30 September to 2 October 1992 and the Workshop for the Asia and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues, held at Jakarta from 26 to 28 January 1993, and manifested in the decisions announced recently by several Member States to establish national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Bearing in mind the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in which the World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular in their advisory capacity to the competent authorities, their role in remedying human rights violations, in the dissemination of human rights information and in education in human rights,

Noting the diverse approaches adopted throughout the world for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level, emphasizing the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and emphasizing and recognizing the value of such approaches to promoting universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the updated report of the Secretary-General, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/124 of 17 December 1991;
2. Reaffirms the importance of developing, in accordance with national legislation, effective national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and of ensuring the pluralism of their membership and their independence;
3. Encourages Member States to establish or, where they already exist, to strengthen national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and to incorporate those elements in national development plans;
4. Encourages national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights established by Member States to prevent and combat all violations of human rights as enumerated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and relevant international instruments;

5. Requests the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat to continue its efforts to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and national institutions, particularly in the field of advisory services and technical assistance and of information and education, including within the framework of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;
6. Also requests the Centre for Human Rights to establish, upon the request of States concerned, United Nations centres for human rights documentation and training and to do so on the basis of established procedures for the use of available resources within the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights;
7. Requests the Secretary-General to respond favourably to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights as part of the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, as well as national centres for human rights documentation and training;
8. Encourages all Member States to take appropriate steps to promote the exchange of information and experience concerning the establishment and effective operation of such national institutions;
9. Affirms the role of national institutions as agencies for the dissemination of human rights materials and for other public information activities, prepared or organized under the auspices of the United Nations;
10. Welcomes the organization under the auspices of the Centre for Human Rights of a follow-up meeting at Tunis in December 1993 with a view, in particular, to examining ways and means of promoting technical assistance for the cooperation and strengthening of national institutions and to continuing to examine all issues relating to the question of national institutions;
11. Welcomes also the Principles relating to the status of national institutions, annexed to the present resolution;
12. Encourages the establishment and strengthening of national institutions having regard to those principles and recognizing that it is the right of each State to choose the framework that is best suited to its particular needs at the national level;
13. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

ANNEX

Principles relating to the status of national institutions (The Paris Principles)
Competence and responsibilities

1. A national institution shall be vested with competence to promote and protect human rights.
2. A national institution shall be given as broad a mandate as possible, which shall be clearly set forth in a constitutional or legislative text, specifying its composition and its sphere of competence.
3. A national institution shall, inter alia, have the following responsibilities:
 - (a) To submit to the Government, Parliament and any other competent body, on an advisory basis either at the request of the authorities concerned or through the exercise of its power to hear a matter without higher referral, opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports on any matters concerning the promotion and protection of human rights; the national institution may decide to publicize them; these opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports, as well as any prerogative of the national institution, shall relate to the following areas:
 - (i) Any legislative or administrative provisions, as well as provisions relating to judicial organizations, intended to preserve and extend the protection of human rights; in that connection, the national institution shall examine the legislation and administrative provisions in force, as well as bills and proposals, and shall make such recommendations as it deems appropriate in order to ensure that these provisions conform to the fundamental principles of human rights; it shall, if necessary, recommend the adoption of new legislation, the amendment of legislation in force and the adoption or amendment of administrative measures;
 - (ii) Any situation of violation of human rights which it decides to take up;
 - (iii) The preparation of reports on the national situation with regard to human rights in general, and on more specific matters;
 - (iv) Drawing the attention of the Government to situations in any part of the country where human rights are violated and making proposals to it for initiatives to put an end to such situations and, where necessary, expressing an opinion on the positions and reactions of the Government;
 - (b) To promote and ensure the harmonization of national legislation regulations and practices with the international human rights instruments to which the State is a party, and their effective implementation;

- (c) To encourage ratification of the above-mentioned instruments or accession to those instruments, and to ensure their implementation;
- (d) To contribute to the reports which States are required to submit to United Nations bodies and committees, and to regional institutions, pursuant to their treaty obligations and, where necessary, to express an opinion on the subject, with due respect for their independence;
- (e) To cooperate with the United Nations and any other organization in the United Nations system, the regional institutions and the national institutions of other countries that are competent in the areas of the promotion and protection of human rights;
- (f) To assist in the formulation of programmes for the teaching of, and research into, human rights and to take part in their execution in schools, universities and professional circles;
- (g) To publicize human rights and efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, in particular racial discrimination, by increasing public awareness, especially through information and education and by making use of all press organs.

Composition and guarantees of independence and pluralism

1. The composition of the national institution and the appointment of its members, whether by means of an election or otherwise, shall be established in accordance with a procedure which affords all necessary guarantees to ensure the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society) involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly by powers which will enable effective cooperation to be established with, or through the presence of, representatives of:
 - (a) Non-governmental organizations responsible for human rights and efforts to combat racial discrimination, trade unions, concerned social and professional organizations, for example, associations of lawyers, doctors, journalists and eminent scientists;
 - (b) Trends in philosophical or religious thought;
 - (c) Universities and qualified experts;
 - (d) Parliament;
 - (e) Government departments (if these are included, their representatives should participate in the deliberations only in an advisory capacity).
2. The national institution shall have an infrastructure which is suited to the smooth conduct of its activities, in particular adequate funding. The purpose of this funding should be to enable it to have its own staff and prem-

ises, in order to be independent of the Government and not be subject to financial control which might affect its independence.

3. In order to ensure a stable mandate for the members of the national institution, without which there can be no real independence, their appointment shall be effected by an official act which shall establish the specific duration of the mandate. This mandate may be renewable, provided that the pluralism of the institution's membership is ensured.

Methods of operation

Within the framework of its operation, the national institution shall:

- (a) Freely consider any questions falling within its competence, whether they are submitted by the Government or taken up by it without referral to a higher authority, on the proposal of its members or of any petitioner;
- (b) Hear any person and obtain any information and any documents necessary for assessing situations falling within its competence;
- (c) Address public opinion directly or through any press organ, particularly in order to publicize its opinions and recommendations;
- (d) Meet on a regular basis and whenever necessary in the presence of all its members after they have been duly convened;
- (e) Establish working groups from among its members as necessary, and set up local or regional sections to assist it in discharging its functions;
- (f) Maintain consultation with the other bodies, whether jurisdictional or otherwise, responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights (in particular ombudsmen, mediators and similar institutions);
- (g) In view of the fundamental role played by the non-governmental organizations in expanding the work of the national institutions, develop relations with the non-governmental organizations devoted to promoting and protecting human rights, to economic and social development, to combating racism, to protecting particularly vulnerable groups (especially children, migrant workers, refugees, physically and mentally disabled persons) or to specialized areas.

Additional principles concerning the status of commissions with quasi-jurisdictional competence

A national institution may be authorized to hear and consider complaints and petitions concerning individual situations. Cases may be brought before it by

individuals, their representatives, third parties, non-governmental organizations, associations of trade unions or any other representative organizations. In such circumstances, and without prejudice to the principles stated above concerning the other powers of the commissions, the functions entrusted to them may be based on the following principles:

- (a) Seeking an amicable settlement through conciliation or, within the limits prescribed by the law, through binding decisions or, where necessary, on the basis of confidentiality;
- (b) Informing the party who filed the petition of his rights, in particular the remedies available to him, and promoting his access to them;
- (c) Hearing any complaints or petitions or transmitting them to any other competent authority within the limits prescribed by the law;
- (d) Making recommendations to the competent authorities, especially by proposing amendments or reforms of the laws, regulations and administrative practices, especially if they have created the difficulties encountered by the persons filing the petitions in order to assert their rights.

BELGRADE PRINCIPLES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND PARLIAMENTS

(Belgrade, Serbia 22-23 February 2012)

The 2012 International Seminar on the relationship between National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Parliaments¹, organised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, the National Assembly and the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia, with the support of the United Nations Country Team in the Republic of Serbia,

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 63/169 and 65/207 on the role of the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, 63/172 and 64/161 on National Human Rights Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and the Human Rights Council Resolution 17/9 on National Human Rights Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Recognising that the principles relating to the status of national institutions (the Paris Principles, adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/134) state that NHRIs shall establish an "effective cooperation" with the Parliaments,

Noting that NHRIs and Parliaments have much to gain from each other in performing their responsibilities for the promotion and protection of human rights,

And recalling the need to identify areas for strengthened interaction between NHRIs and Parliaments bearing in mind that the different institutional models of NHRIs should be respected,

Adopts the following principles aimed at providing guidance on how the interaction and cooperation between NHRIs and Parliament should be developed:

¹ The Conference was attended by experts from NHRIs, Parliaments and Universities from Ecuador, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Serbia and the United Kingdom.

I Parliament's role in establishing a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and securing its functioning, independence and accountability

A) Founding Law

1. Parliaments while deliberating the draft legislation for the establishment of a national human rights institution should consult widely with relevant stakeholders.
2. Parliaments should develop a legal framework for the NHRI which secures its independence and its direct accountability to Parliament, in compliance with the Principles related to national institutions (Paris Principles) and taking into account the General Observations² of the International Coordinating Committee of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (ICC) and best practices.
3. Parliaments should have the exclusive competence to legislate for the establishment of a NHRI and for any amendments to the founding law.
4. Parliaments, during the consideration and adoption of possible amendments to the founding law of a NHRI, should scrutinise such proposed amendments with a view to ensuring the independence and effective functioning of such institution, and carry out consultation with the members of NHRIs and with other stakeholders such as civil society organisations.
5. Parliaments should keep the implementation of the founding law under review.

B) Financial independence

6. Parliaments should ensure the financial independence of NHRIs by including in the founding law the relevant provisions.
7. NHRIs should submit to Parliaments a Strategic Plan and/or an Annual Programme of activities. Parliaments should take into account the Strategic Plan and/or Annual Programme of activities submitted by the NHRI while discussing budget proposals to ensure financial independence of the institution.
8. Parliaments should invite the members of NHRIs to debate the Strategic Plan and/or its annual programme of activities in relation to the annual budget.
9. Parliaments should ensure that NHRIs have sufficient resources to perform the functions assigned to them by the founding law

2 ICC SCA General Observations as adopted in Geneva in May 2013 (ed.note).

C) Appointment and dismissal process

10. Parliaments should clearly lay down in the founding law a transparent selection and appointment process, as well as for the dismissal of the members of NHRIs in case of such an eventuality, involving civil society where appropriate.
11. Parliaments should ensure the openness and transparency of the appointment process.
12. Parliaments should secure the independence of a NHRI by incorporating in the founding law a provision on immunity for actions taken in an official capacity.
13. Parliaments should clearly lay down in the founding law that where there is a vacancy in the composition of the membership of a NHRI, that vacancy must be filled within a reasonable time. After expiration of the tenure of office of a member of a NHRI, such member should continue in office until the successor takes office.

D) Reporting

14. NHRIs should report directly to Parliament.
15. NHRIs should submit to Parliament an annual report on activities, along with a summary of its accounts, and also report on the human rights situation in the country and on any other issue that is related to human rights.
16. Parliaments should receive, review and respond to NHRI reports and ensure that they debate the priorities of the NHRI and should seek opportunities to debate the most significant reports of the NHRI promptly.
17. Parliaments should develop a principled framework for debating the activities of NHRIs consistent with respect for their independence.
18. Parliaments should hold open discussions on the recommendations issued by NHRIs.
19. Parliaments should seek information from the relevant public authorities on the extent to which the relevant public authorities have considered and responded to NHRIs recommendations.

II Forms of co-operation between Parliaments and NHRIs

20. NHRIs and Parliaments should agree the basis for cooperation, including by establishing a formal framework to discuss human rights issues of common interest.
21. Parliaments should identify or establish an appropriate parliamentary committee which will be the NHRI's main point of contact within Parliament.
22. NHRIs should develop a strong working relationship with the relevant specialised Parliamentary committee including, if appropriate, through a

- memorandum of understanding. NHRIs and parliamentary committees should also develop formalized relationships where relevant to their work.
23. Members of the relevant specialised parliamentary committee and the NHRI should meet regularly and maintain a constant dialogue, in order to strengthen the interchange of information and identify areas of possible collaboration in the protection and promotion of human rights.
 24. Parliaments should ensure participation of NHRIs and seek their expert advice in relation to human rights during meetings and proceedings of various parliamentary committees.
 25. NHRIs should advise and/or make recommendations to Parliaments on issues related to human rights, including the State's international human rights obligations.
 26. NHRIs may provide information and advice to Parliaments to assist in the exercise of their oversight and scrutiny functions.

III Cooperation between Parliaments and NHRIs in relation to legislation

27. NHRIs should be consulted by Parliaments on the content and applicability of a proposed new law with respect to ensuring human rights norms and principles are reflected therein.
28. Parliaments should involve NHRIs in the legislative processes, including by inviting them to give evidence and advice about the human rights compatibility of proposed laws and policies.
29. NHRIs should make proposals of amendments to legislation where necessary, in order to harmonize domestic legislation with both national and international human rights standards.
30. NHRIs should work with Parliaments to promote human rights by legislating to implement human rights obligations, recommendations of treaty bodies and human rights judgments of court
31. NHRIs should work with Parliaments to develop effective human rights impact assessment processes of proposed laws and policies.

IV Co-operation between NHRIs and Parliaments in relation to International human rights mechanisms

32. Parliaments should seek to be involved in the process of ratification of international human rights treaties and should consult NHRIs in this process of ratification, and in monitoring the State's compliance with all of its international human rights obligations.
33. NHRIs should give opinions to Parliaments on proposed reservations or interpretative declarations, on the adequacy of the State's implementation

- of human rights obligations and on its compliance with those obligations.
34. Parliaments and NHRIs should co-operate to ensure that the international treaty bodies are provided with all relevant information about the State's compliance with those obligations and to follow up recommendations of the treaty bodies.
 35. NHRIs should regularly inform Parliaments about the various recommendations made to the State by regional and international human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, the treaty bodies and the Special Procedure mandate holders.
 36. Parliaments and NHRIs should jointly develop a strategy to follow up systematically the recommendations made by regional and international human rights mechanisms.

V Co-operation between NHRIs and Parliaments in the education, training and awareness raising of human rights³

37. NHRIs and Parliaments should work together to encourage the development of a culture of respect for human rights.
38. NHRIs and Parliaments should work together to encourage that education and training about human rights is sufficiently incorporated in schools, universities and other relevant contexts including vocational, professional and judicial training in accordance with relevant international standards.
39. NHRIs and Parliaments should work together to improve their mutual capacity on human rights and parliamentary processes.
40. NHRIs, Parliaments and all Parliamentarians should seek to work together in public awareness, education campaigns and encourage mutual participation in conferences, events and activities organized for the promotion of human rights.

VI Monitoring the Executive's response to Court and other judicial and administrative bodies' judgements concerning human rights

41. Parliaments and NHRIs as appropriate should co-operate in monitoring the Executive's response to Judgments of Courts (national and, where appropriate, regional and international) and other administrative tribunals or bodies regarding issues related to human rights.
42. NHRIs should monitor judgements against the state concerning human rights, by domestic, regional or international courts, and where necessary, make recommendations to Parliament about the appropriate changes to law or policy.

3 In relation to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

43. Parliaments should give proper consideration to NHRIs recommendations about the response to human rights judgements.
44. Parliaments and NHRIs as appropriate should encourage the Executive to respond to human rights judgements expeditiously and effectively, so as to achieve full compliance with human rights standards.

Human Rights Centre

Plan of Action 2012-13

1. Establishment of the Human Rights Centre, appointment of the Delegation, and their statutory tasks

1.1 Human Rights Centre

The objective of the work done by the Human Rights Centre (HRC) is to promote and safeguard implementation of fundamental and human rights on the national level. The HRC strives to reinforce a climate amenable to fundamental and human rights in Finland. It also monitors and evaluates, critically when necessary, the actions of the public authorities and other actors to safeguard and promote these rights. In addition, the HRC acts as a channel for cooperation and exchanges of information for actors in the sector in Finland and internationally.

The establishment of the HRC was provided for in legislation (the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act, amendment 20.5.2011/535), which entered into force on 1.1.2012. Its work began on 1.3.2012, when the Director assumed her position. The HRC's two experts took up their offices in May 2012. The HRC is operationally autonomous and independent, but administratively a part of the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

The HRC has started its work in the course of 2012 and 2013 will be its first full year of operation. The main focus of attention in the first year is - in addition to practical measures associated with establishment - making the HRC known and developing forms of cooperation with both the Parliamentary Ombudsman and other actors in the sector of fundamental and human rights.

1.2 Tasks of the Human Rights Centre

The HRC has the following statutory tasks:

- to promote information provision, training, education and research relating to fundamental and human rights,
- to draft reports on implementation of fundamental and human rights,
- to take initiatives and make submissions relating to the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights,
- to participate in European and international cooperation relating to promoting and safeguarding fundamental and human rights and
- to perform other comparable tasks associated with the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights.

The HRC does not deal with complaints or other individual cases that belong to the jurisdiction of the supreme overseers of legality.

1.3 The Human Rights Delegation and its tasks

The Human Rights Delegation (Delegation) was appointed by decision of the Parliamentary Ombudsman on 29.3.2012 and met for the first time on 26.4.2012.

On the basis of the Act and its preparatory documents, the tasks of the Delegation include:

- serving as a national cooperative body for actors in the sector of fundamental and human rights,
- dealing with fundamental and human rights matters that are of far-reaching significance and important in principle, and
- approving each year the HRC's plan of action and annual report.

The Director of the HRC chairs the Delegation.

The matters that the Delegation will deal with in 2012 include, in addition to the HRC's plan of action, Finland's second periodic report to the UN Human Rights Council (UPR), national fundamental and human rights structures and hearings of experts on topical matters (drafting of equality legislation, the Parliamentary Ombudsman's annual report for 2011, etc.).

In addition to these themes and thematic categories, the Delegation will devote its meetings in 2012 to a general discussion of the objectives and operational methods that it pursues in its own activities, taking the provisions of the Act and its precursor documents into account, and will draft a plan of action for itself.

1.4 The national human rights institution

The aim in establishing the HRC and appointing the Delegation is to create in Finland a structure that together with the Parliamentary Ombudsman's statutory tasks meets the requirements of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles approved by the UN General Assembly in 1993. These requirements include an autonomous and independent status not only formally, but also financially and administratively, as well as the broadest possible mandate to promote and safeguard human rights.

In addition to the plan of action for the HRC, a comprehensive strategy covering the entire Finnish national human rights institution will be drafted. The strategy will have to include definitions of general objectives, operational methods and modes of cooperation. The working committee of the Delegation will begin drafting the strategy in autumn 2012.

2. Objectives and activities of the Human Rights Centre

2.1 General

The HRC has broad statutory tasks associated with both general activities to promote fundamental and human rights in Finland and international cooperation. However, according to the Government Bill introducing the legislation, the HRC has broad discretionary powers with respect to what concrete fundamental and human rights matters or situations it deems necessary to concentrate on or draw the attention of, for example, the Government to at any given time.

The areas of emphasis during the first year of activities will be development of national cooperation and flows of information relating to fundamental and human rights, provision of information and promotion of training and education relating to these rights. International cooperation will also be launched by participating in especially the activities of networks of national human rights institutions on both the global and the European levels. The scarcity of resources available imposes limits on activities to some extent.

2.2 Cooperation

The role of the Delegation is an important one as a broadly based cooperative body and the representativeness and expertise that it brings will be put to use. Getting the Delegation's work off to a rapid start has been one of the HRC's key priorities in beginning of its activities. In order to organise its work, a working committee was appointed already at the first meeting of the Delegation. As needs dictate, sections will also be created to deliberate and prepare thematic matters. The first one of these is human rights training and education section. Electronic contact and exchanges of information are being developed between the Delegation and the HRC.

Modes of cooperation and exchanges of information have been discussed and agreed also with the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman with the aim of obtaining the greatest possible benefit from both parties' expertise and the fact that they work in shared premises. The possibility of assigning tasks to either party has been agreed in the new Parliamentary Ombudsman's Rules of Procedure adopted in June 2012.

New human rights actors besides the HRC and the Delegation were also established in the course of spring 2012. In March 2012 the Council of State (Government) adopted the first National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights (NAP), and an independent Panel of Human Rights Actors was appointed in June to monitor implementation of the NAP. A Council of State Human Rights Network composed of liaison persons from ministries was appointed the same day.

The HRC engages in cooperation with fundamental and human rights actors. The most important cooperation channel is the Delegation. The HRC contributes, as an expert, to the work of the Panel of Human Rights Actors. Cooperation with the Council of State Human Rights Network takes place in, among other sectors, human rights training and education.

2.3 Information and communications

One of the HRC's key tasks is to promote information provision relating to fundamental and human rights. Both networks dealing with these rights and other modes of communication are used to disseminate information.

It is stated in the Government Bill that the HRC could, for example, create and maintain a database relating to fundamental and human rights. In conjunction with drafting of the national fundamental and human rights action programme, there was discussion of a need to create in Finland a fundamental and human rights portal, in which key official statements and reports with a bearing on human rights, final conclusions and recommendations of supervisory bodies, rulings by courts and the supreme overseers of legality, decisions of the Parliament's Constitutional Law Committee and statements by nongovernmental organisations would be collated. It could also be possible for the portal to provide practical information and advice on securing rights and availing of already existing web sites by linking them to the portal. The HRC could assume the task of especially following judgements of the European Court of Human Rights and publicising them in Finland.

Developing also other modes of communications is likewise important from the beginning of the work. Both modes of communication and target groups are being considered, including the use of social media in communications. A precondition for achieving an impact is that different target groups receive information in different ways and in a language that they understand. The accessibility of communications must likewise be safeguarded.

The HRC is examining possibilities of creating and maintaining a fundamental and human rights portal as well as opportunities to operate in the arenas of various social media. The exercise involves an exploration of needs and how to avoid overlapping with already existing web sites as well as ensuring that the HRC offers, alongside other information, practical hints for those who need them and makes it easier for them to have access to their rights.

The HRC arranges invitational and public events on themes that it considers important and, to the extent that possibilities permit, in cooperation with other actors in the human rights sector.

2.4 Training, education and research

Training and education relating to fundamental and human rights are important areas of emphasis in the work of the HRC. A sufficient knowledge of the present situation is a prerequisite for their planning and effective implementation. The state of training and education relating to fundamental and human rights has not been comprehensively studied in Finland. The expertise of the members of the Delegation will be availed of to carry out an survey of training relating to fundamental and human rights as well as in collecting existing information and developing cooperation.

The tasks of the HRC include also research relating to fundamental and human rights. Research of this kind is being done in several university institutions, the most central of which are also represented in the Delegation. In addition to units with a specific focus on human rights, numerous other institutions likewise conduct research with a bearing on fundamental and human rights. The HRC collaborates with all of these and makes its own contribution to promoting cooperation between them and carrying out research that is relevant from the perspective of the human rights situation in Finland.

The HRC is conducting a study of implementation of human rights training and education in Finland. The study will serve as a basis for planning further measures in collaboration with key bodies. A human rights training and education section has been created under the aegis of the Delegation to plan and guide this work.

The HRC will conduct an exploration of bodies engaged in fundamental and human rights research and their ongoing and/or planned projects and on this basis will discuss development needs with stakeholders.

2.5 Monitoring implementation of fundamental and human rights and initiatives

The HRC will make a special effort to highlight themes that are important, but have been accorded little attention.

The HRC will, as necessary, draft reports on implementation of fundamental and human rights in Finland and on the basis of these reports present initiatives and issue statements with the purpose of promoting and implementing these rights.

What studies will be needed is difficult to predict and the HRC will have to be able to respond also to unanticipated challenges and requests. Taking into consideration the limited resources of expertise that the HRC possesses, provision must also be made to obtain expertise from outside sources.

Monitoring with respect to implementation of the NAP 2012-13 will be

done by participating as an independent expert member in the work of a Panel of Human Rights Actors. In the Delegation, the importance of monitoring was stressed also with respect to matters not included in the NAP.

Implementation of the recommendations that Finland will receive in the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in September 2012 will be monitored systematically. Finland's voluntary interim report to the UN Human Rights Council will be submitted in 2014. Implementation of the recommendations issued by also other international human rights mechanisms will be monitored and efforts will be made to publicise them in various ways.

The HRC and the Delegation will have an important role in assessing implementation of the Council of State's Human Rights Policy Report and in the process of drafting a new report. The Delegation's broad competence can be availed of with respect to especially questions of fundamental and human rights in Finland.

Finland has been actively participating in negotiations on several human rights conventions and their optional protocols. However, the country has failed to ratify several documents and it has been noted in a number of conjunctions that there are weaknesses in fulfilment of obligations under various conventions. The HRC and stakeholders are engaged in discussions of problematic aspects associated with ratification processes.

The HRC is participating in monitoring implementation of the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights by acting as an independent expert on the Panel of Human Rights Actors. The HRC is actively following drafting of the Human Rights Policy Report, availing itself of the Delegation's extensive knowledge of the state of fundamental and human rights in Finland and its own status as an expert member of the Advisory Board on International Human Rights Affairs. Fulfilment of international human rights obligations is being monitored.

2.6 International cooperation and activities

The HRC is tasked with participating in European and international cooperation relating to promoting and safeguarding fundamental and human rights. The main emphasis lies in cooperation in which also other national human rights institutions participate. The most important international actors from the point of view of the HRC are the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the UN Human Rights Council and the treaty based monitoring mechanisms of the UN as well as the Council of Europe's organs and its Commissioner for Human Rights.

National human rights institutions apply for accreditation (A status) from the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and the Protection of Human Rights. An institution that has been

accorded A status is deemed to have fulfilled the Paris Principles and only those with this status are full members of the International Coordinating Committee and enjoy privileges that include the right to speak in the UN Human Rights Council. Finland's aim is to achieve A status in 2013 -14.

The HRC represents the Finnish national human rights institution in international and European networks for institutions of this kind.

The HRC has the goal of securing A status for the Finnish national human rights institution. The application process will be initiated as soon as possible once the prerequisites are in place (after the first year of operation).

Personnel of Human Rights Centre and members of Human Rights Delegation

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Director **Sirpa Rautio** (leave of absence 4.9.2013–3.9.2014)
 Expert **Kristiina Kouros** (Director, FTA 4.9.2013–3.9.2014)
 Expert **Leena Leikas**
 Expert **Kristiina Vainio** (FTA, 23.9.2013–3.9.2014)
 Assistant Expert **Elina Hakala** (FTA, 1.12.2013–31.5.2014)

MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION AND THE BODIES THEY REPRESENT

1. Deputy Parliamentary Ombudsman **Maija Sakslin**
2. Secretary General **Kimmo Hakonen**, Office of the Chancellor of Justice
3. Ombudsman for Minorities **Eva Biaudet**
4. Ombudsman for Equality **Pirkko Mäkinen**
5. Data Protection Ombudsman **Reijo Aarnio**
6. Ombudsman for Children **Maria Kaisa Aula**
7. Chair **Klemetti Näkkäljärvi**, Sámi Parliament
8. Chair **Liisa Murto**, Finnish League for Human Rights
9. Lawyer **Aiman Mroueh**, Refugee Advice Centre
10. Legal Adviser **Tiina Valonen**, Amnesty International, Finnish section
11. Secretary General **Kristiina Kumpula**, Finnish Red Cross
12. Deputy Chair **Ilkka Kantola**, UN Association of Finland
13. Chair **Pentti Arajärvi**, Central Union for Child Welfare
14. Acting Development Manager **Mirella Huttunen**, Finnish Youth Cooperation - Allianssi
15. Deputy Chair **Helena Ranta**, National Council of Women of Finland
16. Secretary General **Aija Salo**, Seta (LGBTI organisation)
17. Organisation Manager **Göran Johansson**, Central Association for Mental Health
18. Executive Director, Board Member **Kalle Könkkölä**, Kynnys, the Threshold Association, Centre for Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities VIKE (the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities and Kynnys), Handicap Forum
19. Chair **Henna Huttu**, Fintiko Romano Forum, Finland's Roma Forum.
20. Chair **Abdirahid Dirie**, Somali League
21. Executive Director **Petr Potchinctchikov**, Federation of Associations of Russian-speakers FARO
22. Programme Manager Inka Hetemäki, UNICEF Finland
23. Head of Unit **Petri Merenlahti**, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland

24. Secretary General **Esa Ylikoski**, Union of Freethinkers
25. Lawyer **Jouko Pelkonen**, Finnish Bar Association
26. Executive Director **Eero Yrjö-Koskinen**, Association for Nature Conservation
27. Lawyer **Ida Sulin**, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
28. Chair **Astrid Thors**, Advisory Committee on International Human Rights (resigned on 30 August 2013)
29. **Hamed Shafae**, Member, Advisory Committee on Ethnic Relations
30. Deputy Chair **Väinö Lindberg**, Advisory Board on Romani Affairs
31. Executive Director, Deputy Chair **Markku Jokinen**, National Council on Disability VANE, Association of the Deaf
32. Chair **Jukka Relander**, Delegation for Equality
33. Chair **Jouni Mykkänen**, Advisory Board on Senior Citizens and Pension Affairs
34. Deputy Chair **Pirkko Nuolijärvi**, Advisory Board on the Language Act
35. Researcher **Sami Myllyniemi**, Advisory Council for Youth Affairs
36. Chair **Liisa Heinonen**, ILO Advisory Board
37. Academy Professor **Kaarlo Tuori**, University of Helsinki
38. Professor **Elina Pirjatanniemi**, Åbo Akademi University, University of Turku, Swedish Assembly of Finland
39. Research Professor, Director **Timo Koivurova**, University of Lapland, Northern Institute of Environmental and Minority Law
40. **Riitta Ollila**, Public Member, Council for Mass Media

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