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HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



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Action Plan 2021

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Approved at the Human Rights Delegation meeting 21 December 2020

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Human Rights Centre Budget Proposal 2021

The Human Rights Centre Budget Proposal for 2021 sets out operational costs at **EUR 962,000**. Personnel costs amount to EUR 769,000 and the consumption expenditure amounts to EUR 193,000. The consumption expenditure matches the level of 2020, and there was an increase of EUR 92,000 in wage costs.

In 2021, the HRC has **seven permanent posts** (the director, five expert officials and an administrative assistant) and **two new fixed-term employment relationships for young experts**.

The **Young Expert Programme** will be launched in 2021. It involves employing two young people interested in fundamental and human rights at the HRC for 12 to 18 months. The programme has a strong educational content. As Parliament's remote work order due to the COVID-19 pandemic is currently set to continue until 30 June 2021, the Young Expert Programme will begin in autumn 2021.

A new international **Human Rights Advocate Visit Programme** will be also started. The programme involves annually inviting a person working in a national human rights institution or an experienced former expert/top-level authority to learn about Finland's fundamental and human rights, to share experiences and good practices and develop operations with the Human Rights Centre (the National Human Rights Institution of Finland) in one of its operational areas for 1 to 6 months.

The HRC is administratively part of the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman and receives some of its services from the Office. The HRC was provided with new premises in the Parliament's Buildings C and D at the beginning of February 2020. The new premises include desks for nine employees.

The main lines of action of the Human Rights Centre

The main lines of action of the Human Rights Centre are:

- general monitoring and promotion of the implementation of fundamental and human rights and strengthening the implementation of the rule of law
- monitoring and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and older persons
- strengthening cooperation between fundamental and human rights actors, also through the activities of the Human Rights Delegation
- European and international cooperation on fundamental and human rights and the rule of law

Action Plan 2021

General monitoring of fundamental and human rights

Knowledge base on the state of fundamental and human rights in Finland

- Developing and maintaining the knowledge base on the state of fundamental and human rights in Finland. At the beginning of 2021, the HRC's own evaluation and reporting platform will be introduced, and work processes for monitoring will be established.
- Continuing the assessment of the impacts of international human rights conventions and the recommendations of convention monitoring bodies on the development of human rights in Finland, and making efforts to promote the impact of the conventions and recommendations. An international research project on the impact of the UN's Human Rights Conventions will end, and a book on the results will be published in spring 2021. Information will be provided on the results concerning Finland, and a discussion event will be held.
- Strengthening the rule of law perspective and its close link with the realisation of fundamental and human rights both in Finland and in European cooperation. In spring 2021, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (EN-NHRI) will be compiling the second joint report for the European Commission's rule of law review. The HRC will participate in the preparation of the report and write a section on Finland.
- In January 2021, the study results of the SIHTI project on the state of the human rights responsibility of businesses in Finland will be published. The HRC has participated in the project as an expert body during 2020. The HRC will utilise the research results for possible further projects concerning corporate responsibility.

National Fundamental Rights Barometer

- The national Fundamental Rights Barometer, carried out with the Ministry of Justice in 2019-2020, complements the survey on fundamental rights targeted at the entire population of all EU Member States that was conducted in the same period by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The Fundamental Rights Barometer project produces new and comparable data on the situation of linguistic minorities (Arabic, Swedish and Russian speakers) and persons with disabilities in relation to the entire population. The first research results will be published during the first half of 2021. In addition to the joint main report, the HRC will publish two theme summaries on the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities and the general awareness of rights.

Periodic reporting to international convention monitoring bodies

- Taking part in current periodic reporting processes of the UN and Council of Europe and providing information in Finland on the recommendations received from them. The Government reports on Finnish Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights will be discussed by the relevant committees in February and March 2021. The HRC submitted its statement to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights already in 2020, and the Centre will also make a statement on Finland's country report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and participate in the hearings organised by the committees. The HRC will organise an event in May together with the Finnish League for Human Rights on the recommendations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The general promotion of fundamental and human rights

Strengthening the human rights competence of authorities and different professional groups

- The project to develop democracy and human rights education in teacher education will continue until the end of July 2021. As part of the project, material for teachers will be prepared on the rights of persons with disabilities, the right to inclusive education and the rights of the original Sámi people.
- A self-assessment tool has been developed in a joint project with the Parliamentary Ombudsman to strengthen the right to self-determination, especially in housing services for people with intellectual disabilities. During 2021, special service providers will be supported in the introduction of the tool, and training will be provided to strengthen self-determination rights.
- In order to promote the rights of older persons, cooperation will be carried out by developing educational content, organising training for key actors and providing online training content for wider use.
- The training project on the self-determination rights of older people in 24-hour housing services was started with a survey for the personnel of the units involved in the project in autumn 2020. The results of the survey will be published in early 2021 and training materials will be prepared based on the results. Training and the use of the survey for advocacy work will begin in spring 2021.

- HRC's lecture series on fundamental and human rights from 2017 will be updated as necessary, starting with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Advanced training material will be produced on the legally binding nature of fundamental and human rights and the rule of law and its relationship with the implementation of fundamental and human rights.

Cooperation with research institutes and researchers engaged in fundamental and human rights research

- Further developing partnerships with research institutes and researchers engaged in fundamental and human rights research. Project cooperation will be carried out and research results will be utilised in the HRC's activities. Information will be forwarded to the parties utilising research.
- Conducting studies on current themes and topics where information is found to be lacking. A report on the case law concerning section 106 of the Constitution will be completed in the beginning of the year.

Monitoring and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities

The National Human Rights Institution of Finland (HRC, Human Rights Delegation and Parliamentary Ombudsman together) has been assigned with a joint statutory task of promoting, safeguarding and monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Strengthening the legal perspective

- Monitoring compliance with fundamental and human rights legislation and other regulation (including the act on the right of self-determination) and taking initiatives to develop them.

Involvement and inclusion of persons with disabilities

- Raising awareness of the obligations of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in particular its obligation on involvement.
- Promoting the consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities in decision-making that concerns them and supporting the competence and opportunities of disability organisations to influence decision-making that concerns them.
- Developing and strengthening the involvement of the Disability Rights Committee (VIOK) in the activities of the HRC and the Ombudsman as appropriate.

Improving the level of education and participation in working life of persons with disabilities

- Participating in and influencing the discussion on the education and working life of persons with disabilities in order to solve related problems.
- Cooperating with the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman to improve the rights of persons with disabilities in working life. Carrying out a joint project to achieve a better understanding of reasonable accommodations and ensuring that rights are realised in working life.

Developing the collection of disability research and follow-up data

- Promoting and implementing disability research and data collection matching the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Conducting a survey on the use of legal remedies for persons with disabilities and the experiences of children with disabilities and their parents at school in cooperation with the Disability Forum and drawing up theme summaries of the results.

Monitoring and promoting the rights of older persons

In spring 2019, work began at the Human Rights Centre to promote the rights of older persons as its own priority area. The aim is to strengthen the legal perspective, actively participate in the social debate on the situation of older people and influence the necessary change of attitude.

The HRC's work will be supported by the Human Rights Delegation's division on the rights of older people.

Monitoring and influencing legislation

- Monitoring compliance with the fundamental and human rights of legislation and other regulation (including the reform of the act on the care services for older people and the act on the right of self-determination) and taking initiatives to develop them.

Strengthening the knowledge base on the rights of older people

- Promoting the legal debate, research and the utilisation of research data related to the rights of older people by cooperating with different research institutes and researchers.
- Publishing a report on the self-determination of older people in 24-hour housing services and preparing thematic training material on the basis of the report during spring 2021.

- Participating in a research project on the rights of older people with the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy (Krimo), the University of Eastern Finland and the University of Tampere. The first phase of the project was launched in December 2020.

Monitoring the implementation of the rights of older people

- Monitoring and strengthening the implementation, availability and quality of older people's rights in services for the elderly.
- Monitoring the need for and use of services provided to older people at home with a survey carried out jointly by the HRC and the Ombudsman. The survey and its report will be completed in the first half of 2021.
- Taking into account minority groups, the Sámi people and the diversity of older people in general when monitoring the rights of older people.
- Making periodic reports on the implementation of older people's rights and participating in the activities of the UN Open-ended Working Group in Ageing (OEWG).

The Human Rights Delegation's activities and other cooperation

Strengthening inclusion

- Strengthening the promotion of the inclusion of older people in official activities and cooperating with organisations and councils for older people.
- Conducting a survey to examine the activities and operating conditions of municipal councils for older people. The project was launched in autumn 2020 and the report will be completed in spring 2021. The report will be utilised in various ways for advocacy and communications. A series of articles on the councils for older people and the persons involved in them will be made in different parts of Finland.

Promoting international regulation on the rights of older people

- Preparing a background report on the current discussion regarding the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and on the possible advantages and difficulties that the Convention may entail.
- Organising an international event in late 2021 on international and European human rights standards for the rights of older people and the development needs of these rights.

Corporate responsibility and older people

- Using SIHTI research results to launch a project on corporate responsibility in the care sector.

- Developing the Human Rights Delegation's work in cooperation with the members of the Delegation and its two permanent divisions in order to make the Delegation's work even more effective. Giving opinions on topical and important fundamental and human rights issues. The Delegation will approve its annual work plan. The divisions will also draw up their own annual work plans.
- Engaging in goal-oriented cooperation to promote and monitor fundamental and human rights in Finland (independent agents involved in fundamental and human rights, the authorities, the Parliament, universities, research institutes, non-governmental organisations, the media) while taking into account the regional and local level (municipalities, councils for older people and disability advisory councils).
- Preparing a report on fundamental and human rights actors in Finland in early 2021, drawing on and deepening the report of the Ministry of Justice in 2015.

Participation in international and European cooperation

- Participating in events held by ENNHRI and GANHRI and the operations of the working groups according to the focus areas of the HRC's activities. The HRC will lead the ENNHRI Legal Working Group and engage actively in working groups concerning older people, persons with disabilities and the human rights responsibility of businesses.
- Continuing project cooperation with ENNHRI to promote the rule of law and fundamental and human rights in Europe. Supporting the ENNHRI Secretariat in compiling a joint report by the NHRIs on the European Commission's review of the rule of law.
- Engaging in regional and bilateral cooperation with other national human rights institutions. Continuing development of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's monitoring model for the HRC (Belfast Monitoring Platform).
- Continuing cooperation with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to strengthen the fundamental rights dimension and to promote the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights at national level. Organising a joint event in autumn 2021 on the FRA study on the National Human Rights Institution.
- Cooperating with the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN institutions on human rights, in line with the HRC's priority areas. Promoting in particular the implementation of the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the convention monitoring bodies.

Communications

- Increasing public awareness of fundamental and human rights by providing information and communications on current fundamental and human rights issues in different ways and by participating in societal debate and dialogue.
- Focusing on communications on the rights of persons with disabilities and older people, both in general and in a targeted manner, to various stakeholders who can pass on information, advice and guidance.
- Using the location of the Centre to a benefit by providing targeted information to Parliament.
- Improving the accessibility and comprehensibility of communications. Promoting awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and older people in general in order to bring about a change of attitudes.

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00102 Eduskunta, Helsinki
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