

IHMISOIKEUSKESKUS
MÄNNISKORÄTTSCENTRET
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Action Plan 2022

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Action Plan 2022

Approved at the Human Rights Delegation meeting on 20 December 2021

Introduction	4
Junior experts and the international human rights advocate visit programme	4
Finland’s National Human Rights Institution 10 years (2012-2022)	5
The main lines of action of the Human Rights Centre	5
Action Plan 2022	6
1. Monitoring and promotion of fundamental and human rights and the rule of law	6
Knowledge base on the state of fundamental and human rights in Finland	6
Identifying new fundamental and human rights themes	6
Monitoring the implementation of human rights treaties and rule of law	6
Periodic reporting to international treaty monitoring bodies	7
Strengthening of the rule of law	7
General promotion of fundamental and human rights	7
Training in fundamental and human rights and the rule of law	8
Cooperation with research institutes and researchers engaged in fundamental and human rights research	8
2. Communications and advocacy work	9
3. Monitoring and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and older persons	10
Monitoring and promoting the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and following and promoting the development of international legal standards concerning older people	10
Strengthening the legal perspective	10
Strengthening inclusion	11
Strengthening and monitoring the knowledge base of disability research and older people’s rights	11
Improving the level of education and participation in working life of persons with disabilities	12
4. The Human Rights Delegation’s activities and other cooperation	13
5. Participation in international and European cooperation	14

Introduction

The Human Rights Centre's (HRC) financial and action plan (TTS) for 2022–2025 (appended), which has been approved by the Parliament's Office Commission, describes the change in the operating environment and the resulting need to develop the HRC's activities and operating methods. The change in the operating environment has related to rapid technological and social development, challenges to fundamental and human rights and the rule of law, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The independence and autonomy of fundamental and human rights actors, the clarity, accessibility and effectiveness of powers from the user's perspective, and resources are highlighted as important guarantees of the rule of law. Strengthening communication and influencing is the main development target of the HRC.

The HRC's budget for 2022 sets out operational costs at €997,000. Personnel costs amount to €775,930 and the service purchases and other expenses to €221,070. Personnel costs are at the same level as in the 2021 budget, but an increase of approximately €40,000 was made in the purchases of services, mainly allocated for expert, research, translation and interpreting services.

In 2022, the HRC has seven permanent posts (the director, five expert officials and an administrative assistant) and two fixed-term employment relationships for young experts. The HRC is administratively part of the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, but functionally independent and autonomous. The HRC's premises are located in the Parliament's buildings C and D. The premises include desks for nine employees. The HRC receives the premises, equipment and some services from the Parliament and the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

Junior experts and the international human rights advocate visit programme

The "Junior Experts Programme" will be launched in 2022, in which two young people will participate in the HRC's activities and develop their competence in fundamental and human rights during an 18-month employment relationship. The content of the programme will be developed together with the selected young people. The purpose of the programme is to have more of a young person's perspective in the activities of the HRC. In addition to competence in fundamental and human rights, the programme emphasises the rights of persons with disabilities and communications. The members of the Human Rights Delegation can be included in the planning and implementation of the programme as a steering group and mentors.

The "human rights advocate visit programme" will be continued if the situation with the pandemic permits it. Each year, an expert working in a national human rights institution or an experienced former expert is invited to visit the HRC to learn about Finland's fundamental and human rights, to share experiences and good practices, and develop operations with the HRC. The duration of the visit may range from weeks to a couple of months.

In 2021, the HRC was visited by former Croatian Ombudswoman Lora Vidovic. Due to the pandemic, the programme could not be organised as planned, but Vidovic met some fundamental and human rights actors in Finland and participated in the meetings and planning of the HRC and the delegation's meeting.

Finland's National Human Rights Institution 10 years (2012-2022)

In 2022, we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Human Rights Centre, the Human Rights Delegation and the Finnish National Human Rights Institution by organising topical events on fundamental and human rights and the rule of law both in Helsinki and elsewhere in the nation.

The HRC's report on national fundamental and human rights actors will be published in connection to the 10th anniversary of the National Human Rights Institution. The report provides information on Finland's fundamental and human rights structures from a comprehensive perspective. The aim is that the report and its recommendations can be used in future structural reforms and that it supports the activities of fundamental and human rights actors, develops cooperation, and improves general awareness of rights.

At the same time with the national report, the reported drafted by Lora Vidovic for the HRC will be published. The report examines human rights structures of some European countries and the international and European standards concerning national human rights institutions and other human rights actors. The reports complement each other. The HRC will use the reports in its own activities, such as statements, initiatives, and international and national cooperation.

The main lines of action of the Human Rights Centre

The HRC is an independent and autonomous fundamental and human rights actor with sufficient and broad powers in relation to its tasks as required by the UN Paris Principles. The HRC, its Human Rights Delegation and the Parliamentary Ombudsman form Finland's National Human Rights Institution.

All activities of the HRC aim for an impact, and deal with fundamental and human rights and the rule of law comprehensively and equally based on reliable information. Its statutory tasks to monitor and promote all fundamental and human rights provide a strong basis and the necessary flexibility for steering and developing its' activities to respond to each situation.

The main lines of action of the HRC are:

- general monitoring, promotion and strengthening of fundamental and human rights and the rule of law
- communicating and influencing fundamental and human rights issues
- monitoring and promoting the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities and older persons
- activities of the Human Rights Delegation and development of cooperation between fundamental and human rights actors, also on local and regional levels
- international and European cooperation on fundamental and human rights and the rule of law

Action Plan 2022

1. Monitoring and promotion of fundamental and human rights and the rule of law

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

- Developing and maintaining the most comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge base on the state of fundamental and human rights and the rule of law in Finland. The selected themes: the rights of the elderly and persons with disabilities as priorities, the rights of children and young people, the indigenous people Sámi, linguistic rights, the rights of foreigners and asylum seekers, violence against women, sexual and gender minorities, human rights education, the rule of law, and corporate human rights responsibility. Themes can be added or removed as needed.
- Developing the work processes and reports related to monitoring. The first report will be published using the HRC's own evaluation and reporting platform tool (LEMPI).
- Participating as experts in the sub-group developing the utilisation of basic human rights indicators in the Government's PIO action plan.

Identifying new fundamental and human rights themes

- Identifying and monitoring emerging fundamental and human rights themes. Currently these include the impacts that climate change and the loss of biodiversity as well as artificial intelligence, algorithms and digitalisation have on the fulfilment of fundamental and human rights.

Monitoring the implementation of human rights treaties and rule of law

- Monitoring and sharing information on international treaties and mechanisms concerning human rights and the rule of law, general comments by treaty monitoring bodies, and recommendations and complaints/decisions concerning Finland.
- Monitoring and sharing information particularly on the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS 005) and on the decision-making practices of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

- The implementation and effectiveness of the recommendations, complaints and decisions concerning Finland will be actively promoted as part of Finland's development in human rights and rule of law by drawing the attention of national enforcement authorities and international supervisory authorities to the problems in national implementation.

Periodic reporting to international treaty 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. In 2022:
 - Finland is subject to a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN Human Rights Council for the fourth time.
 - Government reports on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) are under consideration by the committees. The reports on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention against Torture (CAT) might also be taken up by the committees.

Strengthening of the rule of law

- Strengthening the rule of law perspective and its close link with the realisation of fundamental and human rights both in Finland and in European and global cooperation.
- In early 2022, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (EN-NHRI) will be compiling the third NHRI report for the European Commission's rule of law review. The HRC will again draft the chapter on Finland. For the first time, the report will also contain recommendations for the member states.
- Developing cooperation with Finnish rule of law actors. Increasing contacts with the court system, the National Courts Administration, the National Prosecution Authority, judicial administration, and organisations dealing with justice related issues. Cooperation with the new Rule of Law Centre by exchanging information, organising joint trainings, seminars, and visits, and participating in the operation of its expert network and steering group.

General promotion of fundamental and human rights

- Issuing statements and initiatives from the perspective of fundamental and human rights for the drafting of legislation and participating as experts in various preparatory working groups and projects. Particular attention will be paid to structural and cross-cutting obstacles to the implementation of fundamental and human rights.

Training in fundamental and human rights and the rule of law

- Continuing to update the HRC lecture series on fundamental and human rights and the rule of law and to production of new thematic courses. Producing training material on the means of legal protection in 2022, drawing also on the HRC report on human rights structures in Finland.
- Continuing the training on the rule of law and fundamental and human rights, in cooperation with Elsa ry, for example. Planning and implementing training on topics of particular interest and concern to young people as part of the Young Expert Programme.
- For the promotion of the rights of older people, cooperation will be carried out by developing educational content, organising training for key actors and providing online training content. The training project on the right to self-determination of older people in 24-hour housing services was launched in spring 2021 based on a study related to it. The training and utilisation of the report in advocacy will continue in 2022.
- A self-assessment tool to strengthen the right to self-determination, especially in housing services for people with intellectual disabilities was published in 2021 in a joint project with the Parliamentary Ombudsman. In 2022, an effort will be made to make the tool widely available.

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

- Cooperation with research institutes and researchers conducting research on fundamental and human rights and the rule of law. Participation in the steering and stakeholder groups of research projects, participation in seminars and hearings, and utilisation of research results in the centre's activities. One example is the SILE research project that examines and develops silent actors' involvement in legislative processes as well as the impact legislation has on silent actors.

2. Communications and advocacy work

- The HRC's communications and advocacy work will be strengthened by allocating the personnel resources needed for it. A communications and advocacy team will be established to support management and experts. Communications and advocacy work will be planned from the start in all activities. If necessary, the personnel's communication skills and competence will be assessed and developed.
- Increasing public awareness of fundamental and human rights by providing and sharing information on fundamental and human rights issues through multiple channels and in comprehensible manner. Improving the accessibility and comprehensibility of communications.
- The HRC's report on Finland's national fundamental and human rights actors, which is published at the early part of the year, will be used to increase their recognition and general legal awareness.
- Participation in societal debate and dialogue. Developing the dialogue skills of personnel and management, for example, using the Timeout method.
- Developing targeted communications for key stakeholders. Young people are a new target group. Using the HRC's location by providing targeted information to the Parliament.

3. Monitoring and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and older persons

The National Human Rights Institution of Finland (HRC, Human Rights Delegation and Parliamentary Ombudsman together) has been assigned the task of promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in accordance with the statutory tasks of each body.

In spring 2019, work began at the HRC to promote the rights of older persons as its own priority theme.

Although the international normative framework and national legislation are partly separate, they also have a great deal in common. Efforts will be made to make more use of synergies and cooperation in the performance of these tasks.

Monitoring and promoting the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and following and promoting the development of international legal standards concerning older people

- Increasing awareness of the authorities and general public of the obligations that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities imposes on the authorities by means of general and targeted communication.
- Taking part in the annual meeting of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG). Continuing coopera-

tion with the UN Independent Expert on human rights of older persons, Claudia Mahler. In autumn 2022, participating in a session of the Human Rights Council in which the country report on Finland will be discussed, as well as sharing awareness and information of the report and the recommendations Finland has received.

Strengthening the legal perspective

- Raising awareness of practices that strengthen the right to self-determination of persons with disabilities and older people by informing and supporting housing services units in strengthening their right to self-determination.
- Strengthening compliance with the fundamental and human rights of legislation and other regulations and making initiatives and statements to develop them. Participating as an expert in the Monitoring Group for strengthening the customer's and patient's right to self-determination, for example.
- Assessing further activities based on the HRC commissioned study on corporate responsibility in the care sector.

Strengthening inclusion

- Monitoring and promoting the participation 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 new ways of including people with disabilities and hearing them on issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in cooperation with the Committee on Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VIOK).
- Including VIOK in the activities of the HRC and the Parliamentary Ombudsman, and linking the committee's work more closely to the activities of the Human Rights Delegation.
- Strengthening the promotion of the inclusion of older people in official activities and cooperating with organisations and councils for older people. Writing a report on participation from the perspective of human rights.
- Continuing the project of councils for older people based on the report published in spring 2021 and using it in various ways in advocacy work 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 measures by the authorities to establish practices for inclusion and participation at the national level and particularly in the new welfare areas by supporting the activities of the new councils for people with disabilities and older people.

- Starting cooperation with the Ombudsman for Older Persons for the purpose of supporting its activities and avoiding unnecessary overlapping of tasks. The new Ombudsman for Older Persons will be invited to become a member of the Human Rights Delegation.

Strengthening and monitoring the knowledge base of disability research and older people's rights

- Promoting disability research and data collection required by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Developing and implementing the HRC's own monitoring of the rights of persons with disabilities and analysing the information collected. If necessary, own studies will be carried out. Carrying out a survey on the use of legal remedies for persons with disabilities together with the University of Tampere, for example.
- Monitoring and strengthening the accessibility and quality of older people's rights in services for older people. Conducting a survey for the customers of nursing services for 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. Participating in research projects, such as one on the rights of older people, with the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy (KRIMO), the University of Eastern Finland, the University of Tampere, and the steering group of the SOLDEX project of the University of Eastern Finland. The project studies the social exclusion of older people in home care.

- In the monitoring and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities and older people, consideration will be given to the diversity of people, such as minorities, the Sámi, the Roma, foreign-language speakers and immigrants, and sexual and gender minorities.

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

- Translating the CRPD's general comment on the right of persons with disabilities to work and employment into national languages and informing relevant target groups of the translations.
- Participating in the discussion on the education and working life of persons with disabilities and contributing to solving problems therein together with other authorities and civil society organisations.

4. The Human Rights Delegation's activities and other cooperation

- Developing the activities of the Human Rights Delegation to make it even more inclusive, discussant and effective. Supporting the implementation of its statutory tasks. The HRC's action plan and annual report will be presented to the delegation for comments and decisions.
- Preparing statements on topical fundamental and human rights issues for the Human Rights Delegation's approval.
- Preparing for the strengthening of the rule of law and the promotion and implementation of fundamental and human rights by providing up-to-date research-based information and recommendations before the parliamentary elections and subsequent government programme negotiations in the spring of 2023.
- Cooperating systematically to monitor and promote fundamental and human rights in Finland, including the regional and local levels. Making a comprehensive stakeholder analysis to further develop and plan effective stakeholder cooperation.
- The HRC's report on Finland's national fundamental and human rights actors, which is published in the early part of the year, will be used to further the mutual cooperation.
- Cooperating with the CMC Finland and organisations that promote peace and security on matters related to human rights and the rule of law, and cooperating with development actors on sustainable development, Agenda 2030 and the national implementation plan.

5. Participation in international and European cooperation

- As a rule, the HRC represents the Finnish NHRI in international and European cooperation and in the international forums. Finland's NHRI is accredited with the highest A-status by the GANHRI (Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions) and the UN, giving the Finnish NHRI the right to participate and speak at the UN Human Rights Council and its various human rights mechanisms and processes.
- Finland's membership of the UN Human Rights Council starting in 2022 offers an important opportunity for the government to influence international human rights policies. The HRC also participates actively at the Human Rights Council as an NHRI representative.
- As of March 2022, the Director of the HRC will be the Chair of the ENNHRI Board and a member of the GANHRI Board for a period of three years. The Chair leads the strategic management of the network and acts as the network's main representative in international and European forums.
- An expert from the HRC leads the ENNHRI Legal Working Group, in which member institutions exchange experiences to increase their competence in legal matters and participate in the development of the European Court of Human Rights and the human rights system by participating in working groups and providing the European Court of Human Rights with comparative information in the form of third-party interventions in significant topical complaints.
- The HRC is active in the ENNHRI working groups on older people, people with disabilities, and corporate human rights responsibility. It also monitors the work of working groups focused on immigration, climate and environmental issues, and communications on fundamental and human rights.
- The HRC will also continue regional and bilateral cooperation with other national human rights institutions and promoting Nordic cooperation across borders for example to secure social and health services for the Sámi.
- The HRC will continue good and fruitful cooperation with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to strengthen the EU's fundamental rights dimension and the rule of law as well as to promote the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights at national level.
- The HRC cooperates with the EU, the Council of Europe, the UN and the OSCE bodies working on human rights and the rule of law, both bilaterally and through the activities of ENNHRI and GANHRI.

IHMISOIKEUSKESKUS
MÄNNISKORÄTTSCENTRET
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



00102 Eduskunta, Helsinki
www.ihmisoikeuskeskus.fi

00102 Riksdagen, Helsingfors
www.manniskorattscentret.fi