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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPORTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**Information presented by the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions on
behalf of “A”-status national human rights institutions in Europe**

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Human Rights Council hereby transmits the communication submitted by the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions on behalf of “A”-status national human rights institutions in Europe,^{*} reproduced below in accordance with rule 7(b) of the rules of procedures described in the annex to Council resolution 5/1, according to which participation of national human rights institutions is to be based on arrangements and practices agreed upon by the Commission on Human Rights, including resolution 2005/74 of 20 April 2005.

^{*} Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.

ANNEX

Statement of the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions to the Human Rights Council

This statement is delivered by the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) on behalf of its ‘A’ status member organisations,¹ concerning agenda item 2 *Report of the Secretary General on measures taken to implement resolution 9/8 and on obstacles to its implementation, including recommendations for further improving the effectiveness of, harmonizing, and reforming the treaty body system.*

The European Group of NHRIs expresses its strong support for the important work of the Treaty Monitoring Bodies and its commitment to furthering its engagement with them.

NHRIs have a unique role in linking the international human rights system with the national level. The work of NHRIs is key to ensuring the national application of international human rights standards. In particular, the work undertaken by NHRIs in engaging with the Treaty monitoring process and in supporting the ratification of the core UN Treaties and the application of their standards into national law is a vital support for the work of the Treaty Monitoring Bodies.

Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the core UN Treaties at the national level is part of the regular work of the European Group NHRIs. European Group members actively promote and publicise the core Treaties and work for their ratification. NHRIs seek to oppose and work for the removal of derogations, reservations and restrictive interpretations of Treaty provisions. European Group NHRIs regularly refer to the General Comments and other statements of the Treaty Monitoring Bodies in their work and are active in following up on the recommendations and concluding observations of the Treaty Monitoring Bodies at domestic level. NHRIs also assist in the development of new standards, as well as contributing to statements and studies, and supporting the work of other human rights monitoring mechanisms including Special Procedures Mandate Holders.

European Group NHRIs interact directly with the Treaty Monitoring Bodies in particular, through the submission of parallel or ‘shadow’ reports to the Treaty Monitoring Bodies, participating in hearings with the Treaty Monitoring Bodies and attending the hearing of State’s Reports. Many NHRIs also provide assistance and commentary to the State Party in the drafting of initial and periodic Reports.

¹ Republic of Albania People’s Advocate, Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Office of the National Ombudsman of Croatia, Danish Institute for Human Rights, French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, German Institute for Human Rights, Office of the Public Defender of Georgia, Great Britain Equality and Human Rights Commission, Greek National Commission for Human Rights, Irish Human Rights Commission, Luxembourg Consultative Commission for Human Rights, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection of the Republic of Poland, Ombudsman’s Office of Portugal, Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, Ombudsman of Spain, Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.

The important role of NHRIs both in promoting the standards of the core UN Treaties, and as part of the monitoring process has been recognised by the Treaty Monitoring Bodies themselves by the increasing role for NHRIs in State Reporting processes.

However, the European Group considers that it is important for NHRIs to have clearly defined roles in the work of the Treaty Monitoring Bodies. In this regard, the European Group very much welcomes the approach taken by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in formalising the role of NHRIs in its work. It also welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Treaty Monitoring Bodies at their annual meetings. The European Group considers that the role of NHRIs should be formally identified in the work of each of the Monitoring Bodies, as well as the types and forms of interaction between the Monitoring Bodies and NHRIs, including through consideration of measures such as the granting of speaking rights to NHRIs during State hearings to enable committee members to draw on NHRI expertise.

A strong, harmonised and clearly defined role for NHRIs in the work of the Treaty Monitoring Bodies will serve to strengthen both the implementation of international standards and the role already played by national institutions in monitoring the core UN Treaties.

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