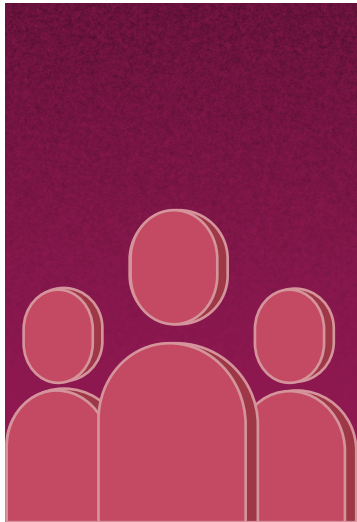






Annual Report 2023



About

ENNHRI's Annual Report 2023 outlines the network's key accomplishments and results last year in line with its three main core objectives. As well as this, it also describes important information related to governance and the network's finances.

Title

ENNHRI Annual Report 2023

Disclaimer

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Foreword

Dear reader,

2023 was a year of milestones. Our [10th anniversary](#) as a network saw us chart new territory in NHRI recognition, addressing (emerging) human rights concerns, and deepening links among NHRIs and with the wider human rights community. Reflecting on what we have done, we looked at how those offer firm foundations for the future.

The network continued to grow and strengthen. The Swiss Human Rights Institution became ENNHRI's newest member, while individual institutions took significant accreditation steps. The Federal Institute for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Belgium received B-status while NHRIs from Germany, Moldova, Northern Ireland and Poland were reaccredited with A-status. In support of the Ukrainian NHRI, ENNHRI conducted a thorough institutional [capacity assessment](#).

Just as ENNHRI is growing, so is the recognition of NHRIs as essential actors in Europe's human rights architecture. We launched our [baseline study](#) on the implementation of the Council of Europe's Recommendation on NHRIs: this offers a springboard for even deeper engagement to bolster NHRIs. The historic [Reykjavik Declaration](#) and the Council of Europe Secretary General's civil society engagement [roadmap](#) also acknowledged NHRIs. Turning to the European Union (EU) the Council of the EU [recognised](#) NHRIs' role in enhancing civic space, while the European Commission put several recommendations on strengthening NHRIs in its [rule of law report](#) – following our own [2023 rule of law report](#).

This Annual Report also highlights the ongoing, crucial contributions of NHRIs to human rights promotion and protection, including on new emerging topics. An example of this was the Co-Lab [event](#) on artificial intelligence (AI), which built on [ENNHRI's input](#) to the first European standards on AI. History was made when [ENNHRI spoke](#) before the European Court of Human Rights' Grand Chamber in major climate cases. The Court also used ENNHRI's [third-party intervention](#) when reaching its conclusions on access to abortion in the case *M.L. vs Poland*.

ENNHRI always seeks innovative ways to build its members' capacity. In 2023, new activities included ENNHRI's [Leadership Programme](#). This provides NHRI heads with leadership development and peer support to tackle the unique challenges they face. The new [small grants programme](#) enabled NHRIs to tease out lessons learned on national level, and facilitates enhanced cooperation between members. Such initiatives are deepening bonds and knowledge among institutions and will lead to an even stronger and more connected NHRI community.

We have come so far together in the last 10 years – as ENNHRI, NHRIs and wider human rights community. By maintaining and deepening this collaboration, ENNHRI will continue thriving and driving positive human rights change across Europe. As we embark on our second decade, we do so with great anticipation for what we can achieve together for human rights, rule of law and democracy.



Sirpa Rautio

ENNHRI Chair

Director, Finnish NHRI /
Human Rights Centre



Debbie Kohner

ENNHRI Secretary General

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List of acronyms

AI

Artificial Intelligence

CDDH-SCR

Council of Europe Drafting Group on Human Rights in situations of crisis

CERV

Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme

CRPD

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DG JUST

European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

DG NEAR

European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

ENNHRI

European Network of National Human Rights Institutions

Equinet

European Network of Equality Bodies

EU

European Union

FRA

EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

GANHRI

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

NHRI

National Human Rights Institution

ODIHR

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OEWGA

UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing

OHCHR

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSCE

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SCA

GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation

SLAPP

Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation

UN

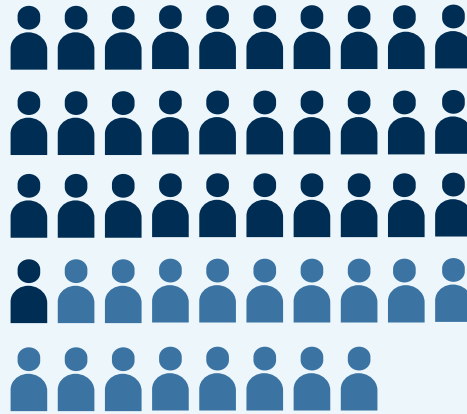
United Nations

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

ENNHRI in numbers

48
MEMBERS



31
A-STATUS
INSTITUTIONS

Often NHRIs hold [multiple mandates](#).
This means they can engage on a range of human rights issues.

25
OMBUDS
INSTITUTIONS



21
EQUALITY
BODIES

27
MONITORING
BODIES

under the Convention on
the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities


27
NATIONAL PREVENTIVE
MECHANISMS

under the Optional Protocol to the
Convention Against Torture

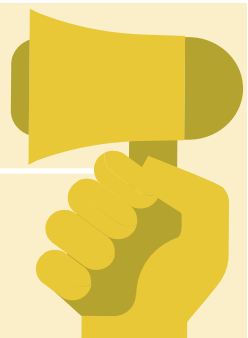
Statistics of the year

ENNHRI ACTIVITIES	4	NHRIs achieved A-status (re-)accreditation
	27	publications, common positions, statements and public letters

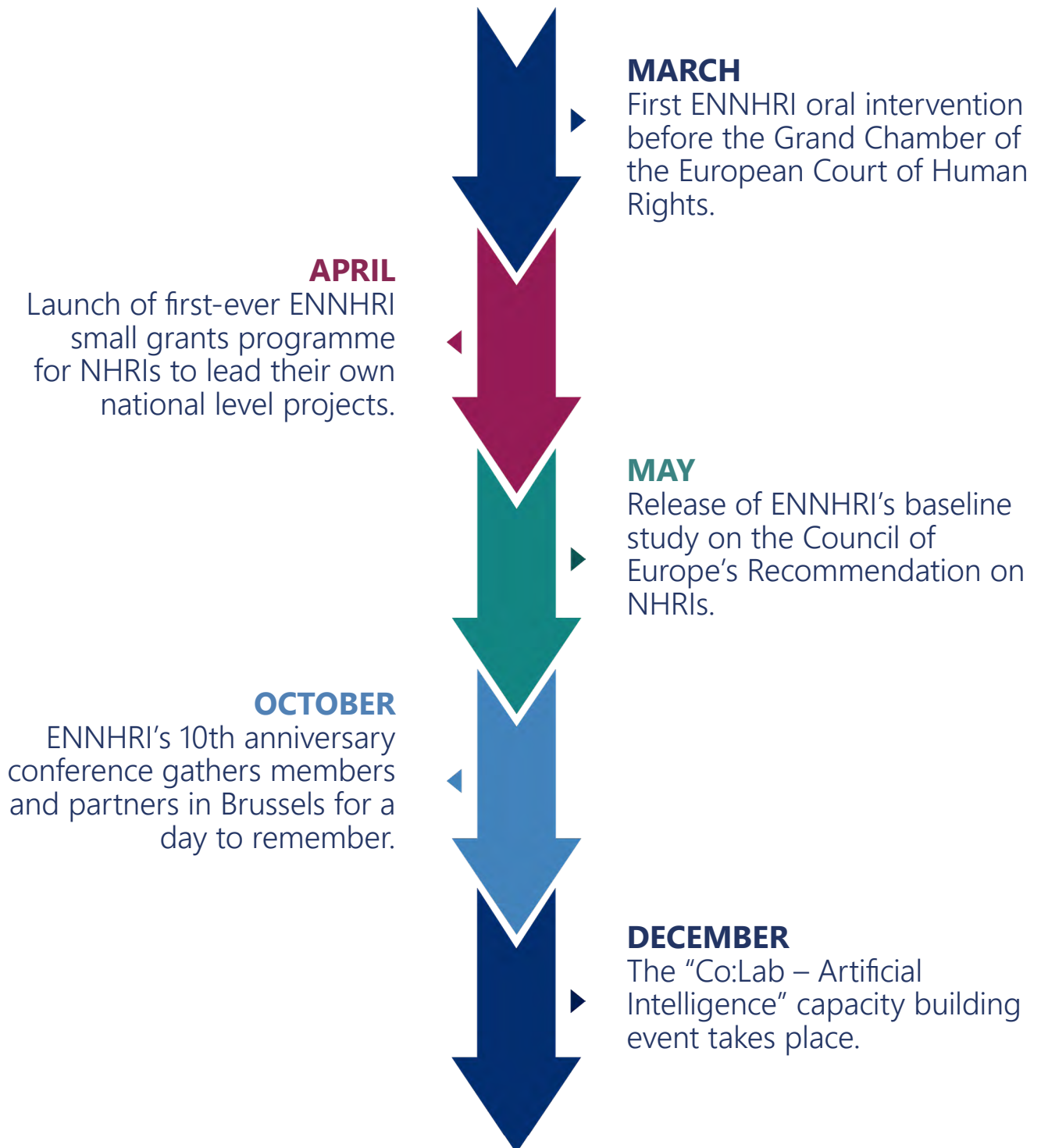
ONLINE PRESENCE	3,370+	new followers on LinkedIn and X
	101,000+	visits on ENNHRI's website



EVENTS	54	ENNHRI-organised events
	1,025	participants in ENNHRI events
	48	members involved in ENNHRI events



2023 highlights





Key achievement 1

More and stronger NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles



Supporting NHRI establishment

ENNHRI continued monitoring and supporting steps towards establishing NHRIs across Europe. In doing so, it engaged with national actors and civil society.

As part of this, ENNHRI carried on supporting the **Swiss Institute for Human Rights** while liaising with civil society and the national government. The Institute became an ENNHRI Associate Member in October 2023.

In addition, ENNHRI [advised](#) the government and spoke before the parliament in **Iceland** on its draft law to establish an NHRI. This contributed to stronger compliance of the draft law with the Paris Principles. ENNHRI also exchanged with Amnesty International Italy and the European Commission on legislative proposals that may lead to the future establishment of an NHRI in **Italy**.

Supporting NHRIs throughout (re)accreditation

In 2023, ENNHRI again gave [tailored support](#) to all members undergoing (re)accreditation.

In total four NHRIs – those in **Germany, Moldova, Northern Ireland** and **Poland** – were **reaccredited with A-status**.

Furthermore, the **Belgian Federal Institute for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights** was accredited for the first time, gaining B-status.

Ahead of SCA sessions in 2024, ENNHRI worked with the **Swedish Institute for Human Rights** to formally request first-time accreditation before the SCA (scheduled for the second session in 2024). In addition, the NHRIs in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lithuania, Portugal, and Spain were assisted to prepare for their upcoming assessments by the SCA.

In October 2023, ENNHRI elected the Croatian NHRI as the **new European SCA representative**. The institution is being inducted throughout 2024.

Beyond this, ENNHRI advised members in **Andorra** and the **Czech Republic** on taking steps towards accreditation. It also worked with the NHRIs and national authorities in **North Macedonia** and **Montenegro** on strengthening the institutions' legislative framework (with the aim of moving towards A-status accreditation).

When following up on SCA recommendations, ENNHRI engages bilaterally with members to support their implementation. Alongside advising NHRIs in **Estonia** and **Denmark**, ENNHRI wrote to **Moldovan national authorities** concerning the recommendations to the NHRI. The Moldovan parliament responded indicating support for these suggested improvements.

Once again, ENNHRI joined efforts to strengthen the accreditation process. Among other things, it participated in the GANHRI Bureau Task Force on Statute Amendments whose work led to major improvements in the SCA process. ENNHRI also joined the SCA subgroup working on amendments to the Statement of Compliance.

Finally, ENNHRI's new **Expert Group on NHRI Standards** met for the first time. Bringing together around 20 NHRIs, this Group will feed into future work in this area.

Strengthening and implementing regional NHRI standards

Engaging with the Council of Europe and the European Union on regional NHRI standards was again a cornerstone of network activities.

In May 2023, ENNHRI launched and presented its major [baseline study on implementation of the Council of Europe's Recommendation on NHRIs](#) at the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. The study includes [cross-regional findings](#) alongside [country-specific analyses](#), good practices and recommendations for each Council of Europe Member State.

Ongoing advocacy meant the study enjoyed continued prominence. It was first presented at the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Human Rights in June 2023 and again in [November 2023](#) as part of an exchange of views on good practices for implementing the Recommendation between state representatives and their Council of Europe counterparts.

In light of NHRIs' new roles linked to **monitoring the fundamental rights compliance of EU funds**, ENNHRI worked with FRA to assess implementation, challenges and good practices pertaining to this. FRA's [subsequent report](#) integrated ENNHRI and its members' views on how state authorities and EU institutions might consider NHRIs' roles in this area.

Engagement around NHRIs' role in applying the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights bore major fruit concerning NHRI recognition. In its [Conclusions on Charter application and civic space's role in protecting fundamental rights](#), the **Council of the EU** invited Member States to set up or facilitate the establishment of Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs; adopt legislative frameworks ensuring their independence; and provide them with the adequate mandate and resources to conduct their tasks effectively.

The renewed commitment of the Council paved the way for further advocacy on dedicated EU standards on NHRIs, including a presentation before the European Commission's national rule of law contact points. Thanks to this and other actions, DG JUST invited ENNHRI to develop a proposal for a dedicated EU Recommendation on NHRI standards for discussion in 2024.

Supporting NHRIs under threat

ENNHRI continued providing **swift and context-specific assistance to members under threat**.

In support of the **Ukrainian NHRI** and its work promoting and protect human rights amidst war, a thorough [capacity assessment](#) was carried out of the institution. This involved the NHRI, ENNHRI, UNDP and OHCHR (the latter two under the Tripartite Partnership). As part of the process, the assessment team conducted a multiday, in-country visit. Launched in Kyiv at an international human rights conference, the subsequent [report](#) outlines detailed findings and recommendations for the NHRI.

Due to concerns for its enabling environment, ENNHRI supported the **Swedish Institute for Human Rights**, advised the Institute on its accreditation efforts, [spoke](#) at a conference in Sweden, and liaised with regional and international partners. In addition, ENNHRI supported the **Romanian Institute for Human Rights** by contacting the Romanian Ministry of Justice about the urgent need to ensure an enabling environment for the institution.

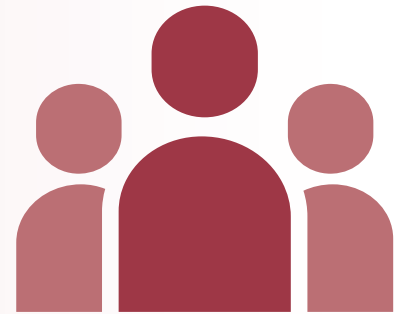
As well as its engagement with specific NHRIs, ENNHRI took steps to improve cooperation and coordination with regional and international partners through the establishment of a new **Contact Group to Support NHRIs under Threat**.





Key achievement 2

More effective promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and democracy



ENNHRI supports European NHRIs in exercising their mandates to promote and protect human rights in a multitude of ways. This encompasses **capacity building, peer exchange**, alongside **strengthening participation rights** in and **facilitating joint contributions to regional mechanisms**. Find out below how ENNHRI did this in 2023 across various (thematic) areas.

Enhancing NHRI participation in and engagement with regional mechanisms

In 2023, efforts in this area focused on deepening NHRIs' engagement with and enhancing their meaningful participation at the Council of Europe. A milestone year at the Council of Europe – in particular its [Fourth Summit](#) held in Reykjavik in May – offered the ideal opportunity to do so.

Before the Summit, ENNHRI published [four key priorities](#) for delegates to commit to and outlined ways to achieve these. These built on ENNHRI's [response](#) to a pre-Summit survey from the Council of Europe's Icelandic Presidency. Subsequent advocacy with state representatives and staff at the Council of Europe produced significant results.

In the landmark [Reykjavik Declaration](#) (the Summit's outcome document), heads of state and government **made clear NHRIs' importance for the Council of Europe**, especially in environmental protection and implementing judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. They also outlined scope for more meaningful engagement.

The Reykjavik Declaration was a springboard for further activities. Carrying forward the momentum from the [Summit's outcomes](#), ENNHRI held **its first-ever meeting with the Council of Europe's Secretary-General** to discuss potential further cooperation and dedicated NHRI support.

In addition, ENNHRI [participated](#) in the Council of Europe's first regular exchange of views with civil society. This engagement met with major success. Published in December 2023, the Council of Europe Secretary General's [roadmap for civil society engagement](#) acknowledges NHRIs' crucial role in implementing the Council of Europe acquis and the need to strengthen the meaningful participation of ENNHRI and NHRIs. A meeting with the Council of Europe Secretary-General is envisaged in 2024 to build on the ties forged in 2023.

IN THE PICTURE (LEFT TO RIGHT): KATRIEN MEUWISSEN, ENNHRI - TEAM LEADER HUMAN RIGHTS; BEATE RUDOLF, ENNHRI BOARD MEMBER AND HEAD OF GERMAN NHRI; SIRPA RAUTIO, ENNHRI CHAIR AND HEAD OF THE FINNISH NHRI; MARIJA PEJČINOVIĆ BURIĆ, COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARY GENERAL; DEBBIE KOHNER, ENNHRI SECRETARY-GENERAL.



Advancing human rights, democracy and the rule of law across Europe

For the fourth consecutive year, ENNHRI released [a report on the state of the rule of law in Europe](#). Reporting covered [virtually all ENNHRI's membership](#), with NHRIs throughout Europe sharing their [national perspectives](#). The report identified Europe-wide trends across [six topic areas](#) and [key recommendations](#) for regional policymakers on upholding the rule of law.

As in previous years, NHRI country reports fed into the EU's own annual rule of law reporting. ENNHRI also contributed to a meeting of the European Commission's national rule of law contact points. Thanks to such engagement, **NHRIs were increasingly mentioned in the Commission's rule of law report**. [Specific references](#) were made to the need to establish and strengthen NHRIs in EU Member States and candidate countries.

The rule of law was also a focus for capacity building. At the [NHRI Academy 2023](#), representatives from 24 NHRIs learnt about major rule of law challenges and using their mandates to address them. They examined topics including independent and effective NHRIs as rule of law indicators; civic space and human rights defenders; and countering SLAPPs. By the end of the week-long event, participants had been equipped with a toolkit for tackling relevant issues.

ENNHRI's **Legal Working Group** served as a forum to discuss both the topics mentioned above and others. For instance, it held a thematic meeting on anti-terrorism to discuss relevant laws and policies at regional and national level, as well as possible future activities. Working Group members also attended a capacity building on implementing judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – read more in the section below.

Enhancing implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights

At both national and regional level, NHRIs are vital in ensuring effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention). 2023 was a landmark year for the network in this area, particularly on the European stage.

ENNHRI delivered its [first oral interventions](#) before the **Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights** (the Court). These concerned two landmark climate change cases: [KlimaSeniorinnen and others v. Switzerland](#) and [Duarte Agostinho and others v. Portugal](#). Read more in the [“climate change and human rights”](#) section.

Both oral interventions were based on **ENNHRI third-party submissions to the Court**, with 2023 also seeing further activity in this area. In June, ENNHRI [submitted](#) an intervention in the case *Dian v. Denmark* concerning the criminalisation of begging. In December 2023, the Court delivered its judgment in the case *M.L. v. Poland* concerning restrictions in access to legal abortion and rule of law compliance in Poland. This [referred](#) to ENNHRI's third-party intervention in the case.

NHRIs also play a key role in **supporting the implementation of judgments of the Court**. In the context of the historic Fourth Council of Europe Summit and the subsequent Reykjavik Declaration, ENNHRI provided suggestions to the Latvian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe on advancing NHRIs' role. In June 2023, ENNHRI met with the President of the Court to discuss both what NHRIs can do nationally and third-party interventions to the Court.

IN THE PICTURES (TOP TO BOTTOM): ADELE MATHESON MESTAD, HEAD OF NORWEGIAN NHRI, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ENNHRI IN *DUARTE AGOSTINHO AND OTHERS V. PORTUGAL* ORAL INTERVENTION; JENNY SANDVIG, (FORMER) POLICY DIRECTOR AT NORWEGIAN NHRI, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ENNHRI IN *KLIMASENIORINNEN AND OTHERS V. SWITZERLAND* ORAL INTERVENTION.





IN THE PICTURE: PARTICIPANTS AT THE TRAINING “IMPLEMENTING JUDGMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: HOW CAN NHRIS GET INVOLVED?”

Finally, to strengthen NHRIs’ awareness of and work supporting the implementation of Court judgments, a [two-day training](#) was held in Strasbourg. Representatives from 18 NHRIs participated in the training. They also met judges from the Court and attended a meeting of ENNHRI’s Legal Working Group.

Advancing implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

Work on NHRIs and application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights carried on apace in 2023, with much coming in the context of **the EEA Norway Grants-funded and FRA-led project** that began in 2022. ENNHRI had the role of expert partner.

Through the project, the seven NHRIs involved continued strengthening their ability to implement the Charter at national level and monitor the fundamental rights compliance of EU funds. As part of this, participants met in Vienna in March, September and October 2023 (the latter a study visit at FRA). When project partners [gathered in Oslo](#) in August 2023, ENNHRI organised a public meeting for NHRIs to showcase their national rule of law work. The two-year project’s final conference is scheduled for February 2024.

ENNHRI continued collaborating with key counterparts from the European Commission on advancing implementation of the EU Charter. Notably it [contributed](#) to the Commission's annual reporting on Charter implementation, which in 2023 focused on effective legal protection as a precondition for applying fundamental rights. **The European Commission's [subsequent report](#) recognised NHRIs' complaints-handling mandate and its importance** in applying equality and non-discrimination law and the Charter.

Human rights defenders and civic space

Once again, work concerning human rights defenders and civic space formed a fundamental part of the network's activities.

In April, ENNHRI [inputted](#) into the EU's Defence of Democracy Package. The submission ultimately resulted in **recognition of NHRIs' role in monitoring civic space in the related [European Commission Recommendation on civic engagement](#)**. Further acknowledgment in this regard came from the Council of the EU, which [referenced](#) the importance of NHRIs in enhancing civic space.

Attendance of a European Commission seminar series on safeguarding civic space also boosted visibility of work in this area and increased understanding of the challenges faced and protections needed (including for NHRIs). This is reflected in the European Commission's outcomes report on a thriving civic space.

Advocacy also continued on **countering strategic lawsuits against public participation** (SLAPPs). Following engagement with MEPs and relevant actors, the network's [common position](#) on the EU's Anti-SLAPP Directive was widely reflected in the provisional agreement on the Directive. Alongside the above, ENNHRI [contributed](#) to the consultation on the draft Council of Europe Recommendation on SLAPPs.

Artificial intelligence

As one of the key emerging human rights topics, **artificial intelligence** (AI) was **again a network priority in 2023**. This prompted extensive regional advocacy, capacity building, and peer exchange.

Through its observer status at the Council of Europe Committee on AI (CAI), ENNHRI contributed to ongoing negotiations on the **Council of Europe's draft Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law**. At the five CAI plenary sessions in 2023, it highlighted the need for the Convention to adopt a human rights based-approach to AI. It also provided comments on the revised draft Convention text. Advocacy around the CAI sessions included a [joint statement](#) with Equinet on independent oversight and enforcement mechanisms. Drawing on the network's key positions, different ENNHRI members also advocated with their national representatives to the CAI. The year concluded with an updated ENNHRI [common position](#) on the Convention.

As ENNHRI and others had advocated for, the eventual draft Convention included greater reference to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. A reference was also made to the need to cooperate with "national human rights structures" under the Convention; this includes NHRIs. ENNHRI was represented throughout negotiations by one of its Belgian members, Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism).

Another pillar of ENNHRI's AI-related work was the **EU's AI Act**. A [common position](#) from September 2023 outlined key recommendations for improving the Act to ensure strong human rights protection. A joint ENNHRI and Equinet [statement](#) released in advance of related EU trilogue discussions outlined a set of [recommendations](#) for ensuring strong equality and fundamental rights safeguards in the AI Act.

In line with ENNHRI's and others' advocacy, the draft EU AI Act integrated greater protection for fundamental rights. This included a partial ban on live facial recognition and the provision for the designation/creation of national supervisory authorities to apply and implement the AI Act. NHRIs are among the national bodies who may become supervisory authorities.

In March 2023, ENNHRI and NHRI leaders joined a [high-level event](#) held by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights on AI and human rights. The Commissioner published a statement following this reaffirming the key role of 'national human rights structures' (among them NHRIs) in

preventing, mitigating, and overseeing the human rights impacts of AI systems. The event also informed a [new report](#) from the Commissioner on protecting human rights in the era of AI. This included several references to NHRIs' role and ENNHRI's work.

As well as feeding into related regional advocacy, ENNHRI's **Working Group on AI** offered a platform for mutual learning and knowledge exchange in this new field. In a Q&A with FRA, members learned more about bias in algorithms. The Working Group also met with their Equinet counterparts on AI Act engagement and ENNHRI's Asylum and Migration Working Group for insights on their AI-related capacity building. Read more about this in the ["asylum and migration"](#) section.



IN THE PICTURE: PARTICIPANTS AT THE CO:LAB ON AI EVENT

Co:Lab on AI

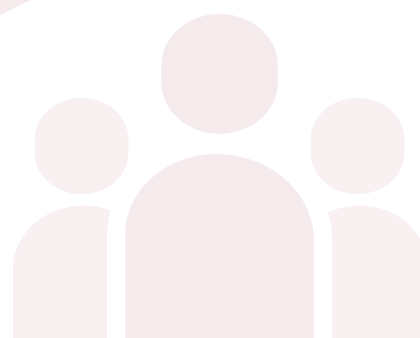
The [Co:Lab](#) was the centrepiece of ENNHRI's capacity building on AI. Taking place from 30 November – 1 December 2023 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, it gathered over 40 participants from 34 different NHRIs. Together they discussed the human rights implications of AI through different thematic lenses, while considering the synergies between these. Among the topics considered included AI's (impact on) securitisation, asylum and migration, and economic and social rights. NHRIs also learnt about using their specific mandate to work and advocate on AI. The event was co-organised with the Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia.

Empowering NHRI leaders and national projects

The ways in which the network supports heads of NHRIs and national level work assumed new dimensions last year.

Firstly, ENNHRI's new [regranting mechanism](#) was launched. It gave nine members the means to implement national projects of their design. Indeed, it marked the first time the network had embarked on such an initiative. Through their initiatives, NHRIs have built national level capacity in varied areas, sharing the subsequent learning and results with peers. Among the diverse activities conducted were the development of a national index on business and human rights, the creation of an e-learning platform for youth, and research on workplace sexual harassment in the health sector.

Secondly, to support and guide heads of institutions, ENNHRI launched its [NHRI Leadership Programme](#). Its components include mentoring, inductions for new leaders, and a leadership competency framework. The Programme offers a platform and safe environment for sharing information, experiences and knowledge, and in doing so is fostering stronger and more connected NHRIs. To that end, ENNHRI organised an in-person induction for new NHRI leaders in Oslo in August 2023. Building on the knowledge gained, a Leadership Forum was planned for the early part of 2024.



Other human rights topics



Asylum and migration

A major focus of the Asylum and Migration Working Group in 2023 was **examining the human rights impacts of the war in Ukraine**. Peer exchanges were held on integration and access to social services; increased risks of human trafficking and labour exploitation; and promoting and protecting the rights of individuals with compounded vulnerabilities. These aided the ability of NHRIs to tackle issues they were encountering. In addition, a dedicated online meeting for NHRIs in countries bordering Ukraine allowed them to gain insight into tackling the specific challenges they faced.

Throughout the year, ENNHRI engaged with partners on key matters in this topic area. This included a meeting with the Frontex Fundamental Rights Office on fundamental rights and forced return monitoring. In addition, ENNHRI attended a EU Asylum Agency consultation on establishing their complaints mechanism. This strengthened the Agency's understanding of NHRIs' potential role and added value in relation to functioning of the mechanism.

Reflecting AI's status as a topic of cross-cutting importance, the Asylum and Migration Working Group held a **capacity building in May** on new technologies, migration, and human rights. Participating NHRIs gained insights on the tools available to assess the human rights impacts of new technologies and ways that NHRIs are of added value in this emerging human rights area. In parallel, a scoping paper was prepared as a resource to inform the work of NHRIs in this field.



IN THE PICTURE: ENNHRI'S ASYLUM AND MIGRATION WORKING GROUP ATTENDING A CAPACITY BUILDING EVENT ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES, MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

Climate change and human rights

Carrying forward work from 2022, NHRIs and ENNHRI made significant contributions to regional developments concerning climate change and human rights.

Two major moments came when [ENNHRI orally intervened](#) before the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in historic climate cases. In its **March** intervention in [KlimaSeniorinnen and others v. Switzerland](#), ENNHRI [argued](#) that states must protect the right to life and physical integrity enshrined in Articles 2 and 8 of the Convention by cutting greenhouse gases. In its September intervention in [Duarte Agostinho and others v. Portugal and others](#), ENNHRI [argued](#) that states must protect people on their territory from the harmful effects of emissions under their effective control. For both of the oral interventions, the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution spoke on behalf of ENNHRI.

Through participation in the Council of Europe's Drafting Group on Human Rights and Environment (CDDH-ENV), NHRIs inputted into regional standard-setting. Their contributions focused on reiterating **the need to develop a legally binding instrument recognising the right to a healthy environment**. In line with this, ENNHRI released a [new statement](#) before the CDDH-ENV meeting in September 2023. Advocacy on the binding instrument is continuing in 2024.

Evidence of the impactful engagement of NHRIs and ENNHRI on climate and the right to a healthy environment came when the historic [Reykjavik Declaration](#) explicitly recognised NHRIs' relevance in this area.

Business and human rights

NHRIs again collaborated to provide their perspective on key regional policy processes in business and human rights. ENNHRI's Business and Human Rights Working Group developed a [statement](#) on the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and a [common position](#) on its proposed Forced Labour Ban. The former set out key positions prior to decisive trilogue negotiations on the CSDDD and raised NHRI visibility on this vital topic. A meeting of Working Group members with the European External Action Service also helped forge ties and flag possible NHRI involvement in an international context.

Economic, social and cultural rights

ENNHRI continued to engage with the Council of Europe, FRA, and Equinet through the Platform on Economic and Social Rights. At the Platform's 2023 meeting, members of ENNHRI's Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights learnt about social rights in the digital age, with a focus on employment and social protection. They gave feedback on how to provide better support so NHRIs can engage on the topic. In other Working Group meetings, members considered topics such as economic and social rights in the context of the climate crisis and just transition.

Human rights in situations of crisis and conflict

In 2023, ENNHRI members again participated in the Council of Europe's Drafting Group on Human Rights in situations of crisis (CDDH-SCR). They provided their expertise on human rights impact assessments (HRIAs) of measures taken by states in situations of crisis, while emphasising the value of consulting NHRIs when conducting such assessments. The knowledge shared by NHRIs is feeding into a toolkit being developed by CDDH-SCR on conducting HRIAs on the measures taken by states in situations of crisis. It is due for release in 2024.

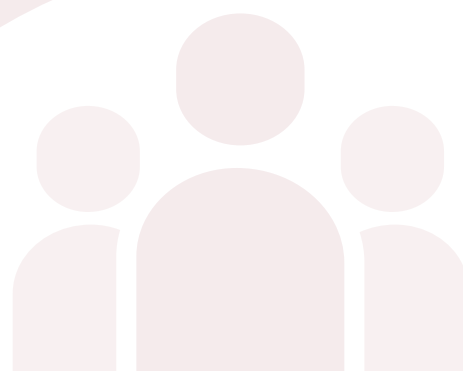
Beyond this, NHRIs came together to consider the wide-ranging human rights impacts of the war against Ukraine. See more on what they discussed in the section on ["asylum and migration"](#).

Rights of older with disabilities

ENNHRI's CRPD Working Group undertook an ambitious work programme, with multiple online meetings and a webinar. Through cooperation with the European Disabilities Forum, NHRIs kept abreast of regional developments on the EU Disability Card and the Violence Against Women Directive in the context of persons with disabilities. In the webinar, members explored challenges and good practices for monitoring CRPD compliance in the implementation of EU funds. AI's impact on persons with disabilities was also on the Working Group's radar, with this explored in a [blog](#). [Read more](#) in the Working Group's regular newsletters.

Rights of older persons

A major part of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons' activities focused on advocating for a new UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. This included a [launch event](#) in January 2023 for its related [briefing paper](#). In addition to discussing advocacy, the group's online meetings offered an opportunity to explore the impact of AI on the rights of older persons.





Key achievement 3

A stronger and more sustainable network



United in action: 10 years of promoting and protecting human rights together

2023 was a milestone year, marking a decade since ENNHRI began. On 10 October 2023, the network marked its [10-year anniversary](#) with a **special conference in Brussels**. Gathering ENNHRI members from over 40 countries and partners and peers from across Europe, this milestone event was marked by [exchange, dialogue and connection](#).

The conference looked back on the common journey and achievements of ENNHRI and NHRIs. At the same time, it looked ahead to how NHRIs and Europe's wider human rights community can engage on emerging issues and tackle future challenges [together](#). A dedicated [interactive webpage](#) was also created to tell ENNHRI's 10-year anniversary story.



A vibrant, accountable and member-led network

Last year, ENNHRI's members continued to **work together in a spirit of positive cooperation and show collaborative leadership** in taking important decisions.

Following many months of careful consideration and review, and taking into account ENNHRI's Statutes and relevant governance procedures, ENNHRI members voted to [exclude the Russian NHRI](#) in April.

Later in the year, **ENNHRI's statutes were reviewed and adapted** to align with the network's current needs and to enable participative and effective decision-making. The [new Statutes](#) were adopted at the ENNHRI General Assembly in October 2023.

ENNHRI's Working Groups were again at the heart of much of the network's activities. Quarterly meetings of ENNHRI's Working Group Chairs facilitated peer exchange and learning and built synergies across the Groups, and played a key role in identifying ENNHRI's thematic priorities for 2024. The topics that ENNHRI's Board decided to prioritise in 2024 were AI and securitisation and its impacts on human rights.

Ensuring network visibility and communicating human rights

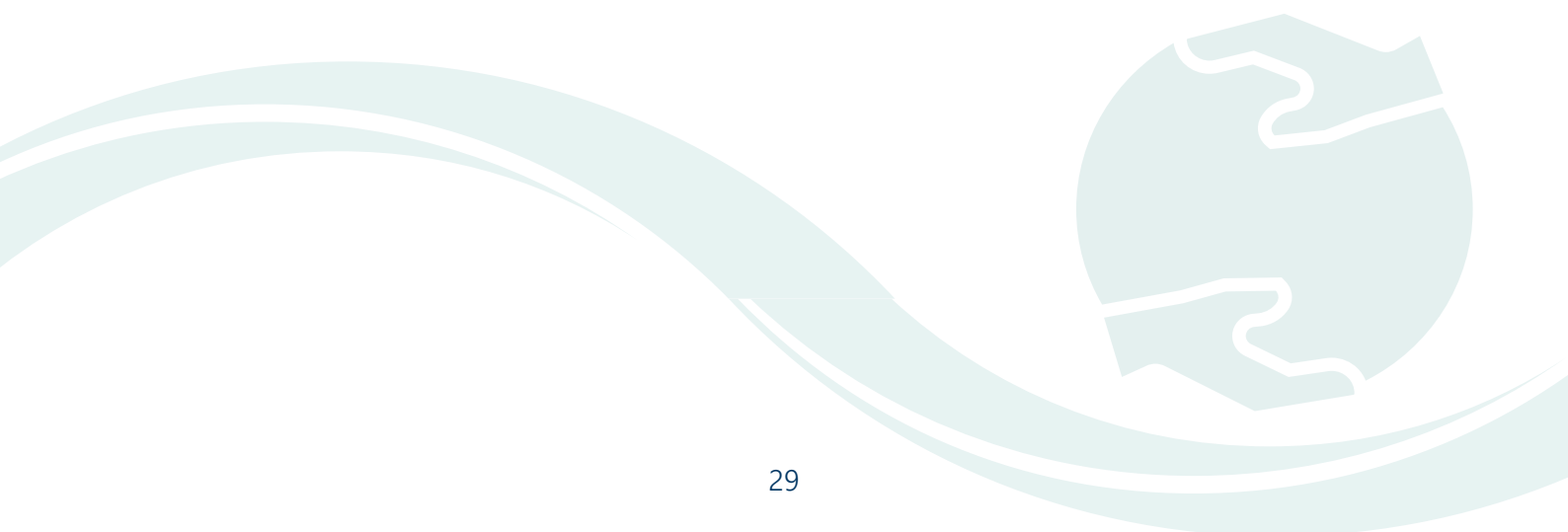
Network and NHRI visibility continued to grow in 2023 thanks to targeted communication activities. Comparisons to 2022 show this rise clearly. [Website](#) visits increased by 6.4%; [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) (formerly Twitter) followers by 54.8% and 10.8%; and [external newsletter](#) subscribers rose by 29.9%.

Varied communication activities drove this user engagement. They included interactive report webpages (the [Council of Europe baseline study](#) and [2023 rule of law report](#)); social media campaigns (such as [before](#) the Council of Europe Reykjavik Summit); videos (including for [Human Rights Day 2023](#)); and in-depth articles (like [the one](#) marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities). ENNHRI's [10-year anniversary](#) also offered a major vehicle to showcase ENNHRI's and NHRIs' work. Read more in the [section](#) dedicated to this.

Finally, **ENNHRI's Communications Working Group** again offered a community of practice on communicating human rights. At quarterly meetings, peers exchanged on their work and relevant good practices.

A financially sustainable network

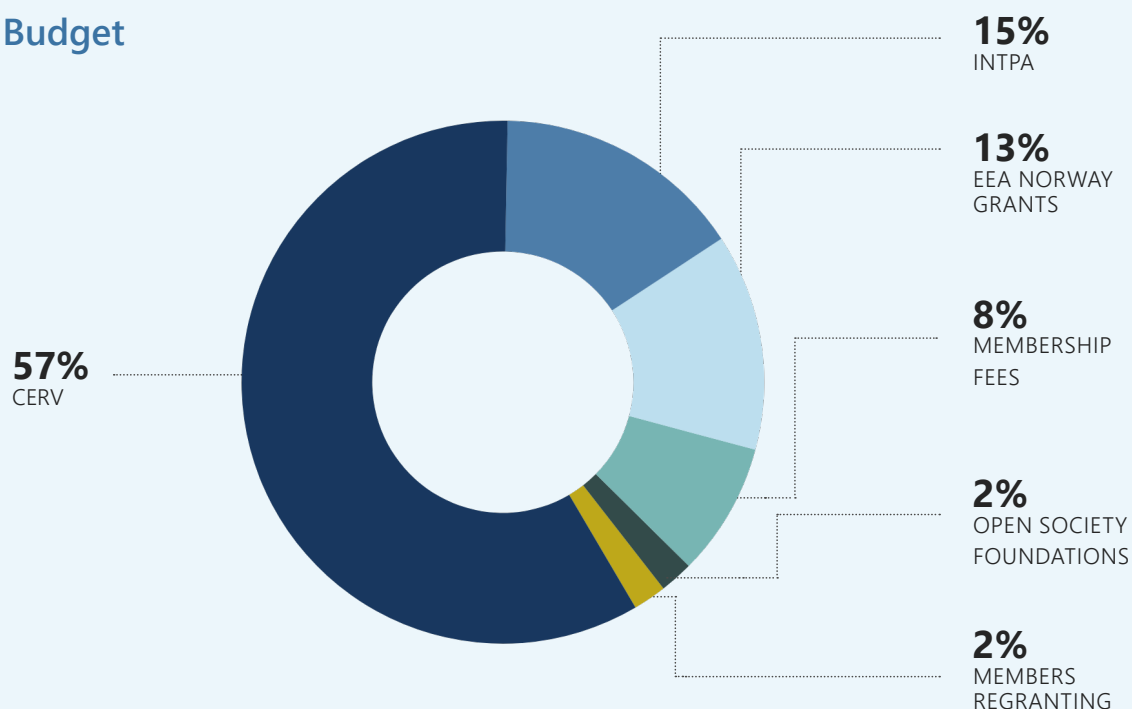
The financial results in 2023 have been made possible thanks to the contributions of all ENNHRI members through their usual annual membership fees. ENNHRI would also like to acknowledge the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers for providing an operating grant under its CERV programme; the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development for the framework partnership under the NHRI.EU project 3.0; and finally EEA-Norway Grants for supporting continued work on the rule of law and applying the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.



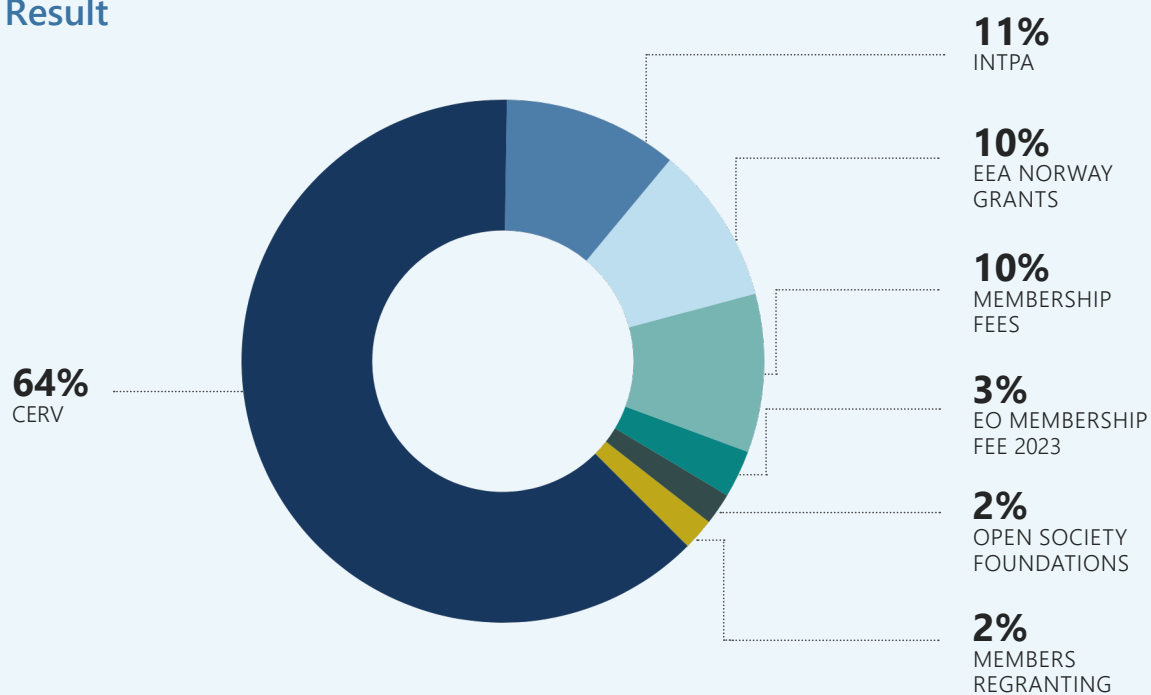
Financial results

Incomes 2023

Budget

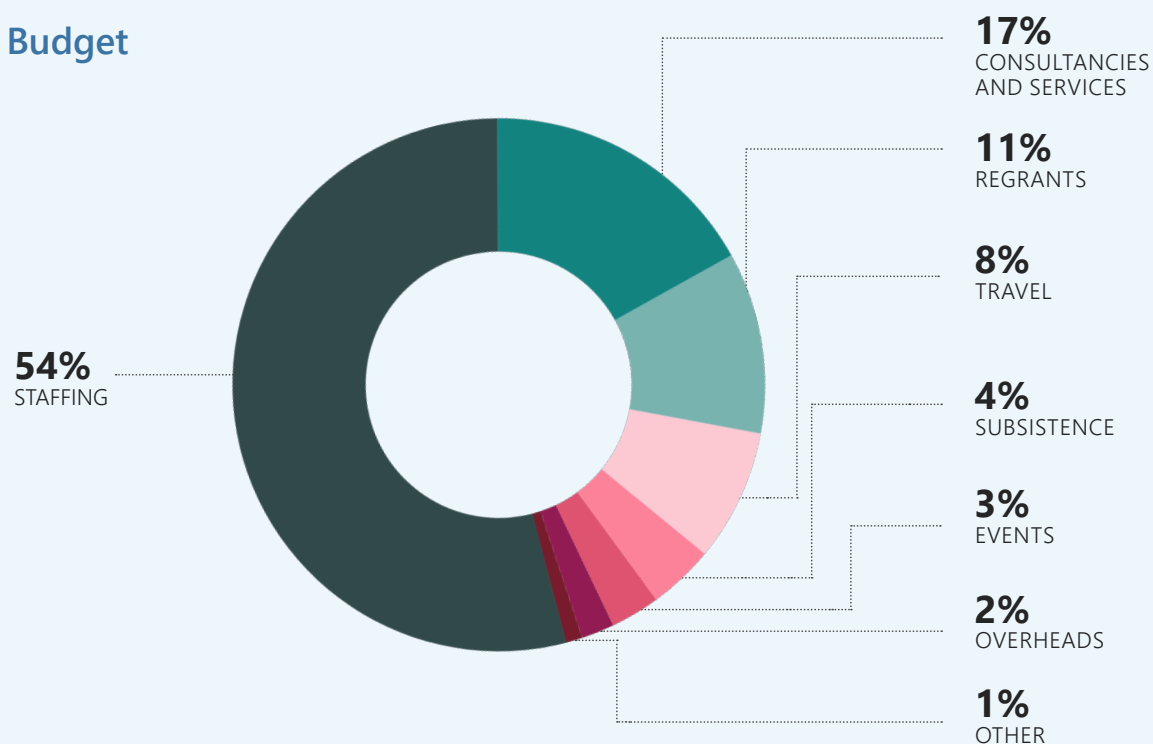


Result

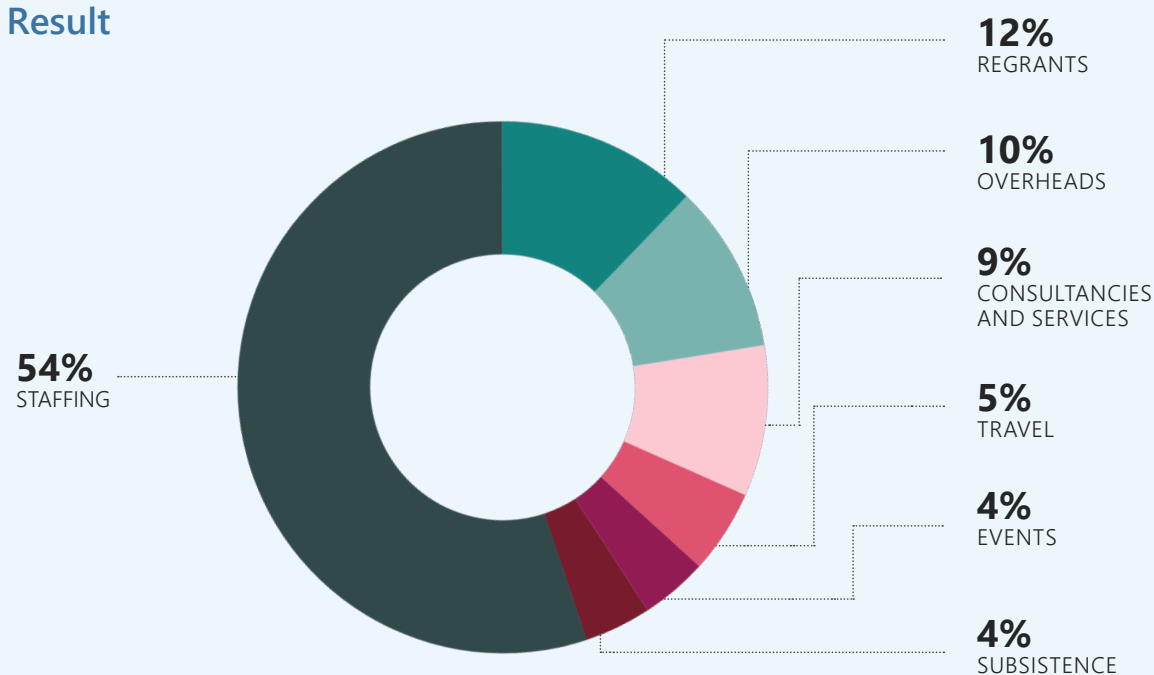


Expenditures 2023

Budget



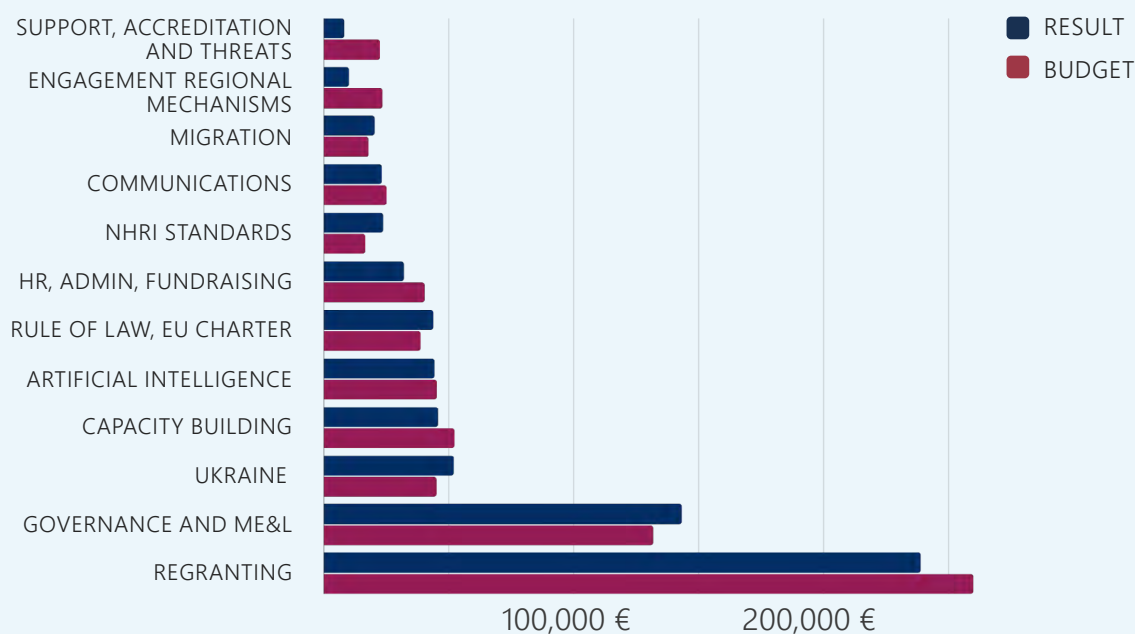
Result



Balance for 2023

INCOMES		TOTAL	
		Budget	Result
TOTAL		2,155,363.24 €	1,915,367.65 €
EXPENDITURES		TOTAL	
		Budget	Result
TOTAL		2,140,554.73 €	1,913,954.75 €
BALANCE			1,412.90 €
Result 2023			13,932.65 €
Accumulated profits previous years			145,073.88 €
Total reserves December 2023			159,006.53 €

Activity costs 2023



ENNHRI Board

Member	Represented by
Finnish Human Rights Centre (Chair)	Sirpa Rautio
Office of the People's Advocate of Albania	Erinda Ballanca
Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria	Diana Kovatcheva
German Institute for Human Rights	Beate Rudolf
Norwegian National Human Rights Institution	Petter Wille
Office of the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights	Mirosław Wróblewski

Finance Committee

Member	Represented by
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (Chair)	Lorraine Hamill
Unia – Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (Belgium)	Emmanuel Schelfhout
German Institute for Human Rights	Michael Windfuhr
Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain)	Alan Sharman

Working Groups

Working Group	Chair(s)
Artificial Intelligence	Co-Chair: Unia - The Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities (Nele Roekens) Co-Chair: Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (Quirine Eijkman) From 6 July 2023 onwards: Chair: Unia - The Interfederal Center for Equal Opportunities (Nele Roekens)
Asylum and Migration	Greek National Commission for Human Rights (Eva Tzavala)
Business and Human Rights	Danish Institute for Human Rights (Daniel Morris)
Climate Crisis and Human Rights	Office of the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia (Maja Hasanbašić) until 30 January 2023 Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations (Katalin Sulyok) thereafter
Communications	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (Jason McKeown) Vice-Chair: Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain) (Molly Avigdor)
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Office of the Public Defender of Georgia (Ekaterine Skhiladze) until 20 March 2023 Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia (Jerneja Turin) thereafter
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Co-Chair: Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (Christiaan Duijst) Co-Chair: Greek National Commission for Human Rights (Katerina Charokopou)
Legal	Finnish Human Rights Centre (Leena Leikas)
Rights of Older Persons	Co-Chair: Office of the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights (Anna Chabiera) Co-Chair: Office of the Public Defender of Georgia (Nino Shalamberidze)



Secretariat staff

As of 31 December 2023

Position	Staff member
Secretary-General	Debbie Kohner
Team Leader: Human Rights	Katrien Meuwissen
Team Leader: Network Development	Maurice Claassens
Advisor to the Secretary-General	Marta Gattini
Human Rights Officer (Capacity Building)	Sophie Hale
Human Rights Officer (Legal)	Paula Nowek
Human Rights Officer (Accreditation)	Klara Paro
Advisor: Ukraine and Gender	Oleksandra Zub
Administration Officer	Christos Katsalis
Regranting Officer	Roberta Taramelli
Finance and Human Resources Officer	Thomas Tharakan
Communications Officer	Richard Adams
Junior Human Rights Officer	Mattia Concas

Position	Trainee
Communications Assistant	Celina Bebenek
Administration Assistant	Cécile Vicquery
Human Rights Assistant	João Verdelho

We thank all the former colleagues who left over the course of 2023 for their invaluable contributions to ENNHRI: Gabriel Almeida as Senior Human Rights Officer; Dimitrios Kelaidonis as an Administration Assistant; Lisa Dolan as a Human Rights Assistant.

List of ENNHRI members

As of 31 December 2023

Country	Institution	Accreditation Status
Albania	People's Advocate of Albania	A
Andorra	Citizen's Ombudsman of Andorra	None
Armenia	Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia	A
Austria	Austrian Ombudsman Board	A
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan Ombudsman Institute	B
Belgium	Unia – Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities	B
Belgium	Myria – Federal Migration Centre	None
Belgium	Combat Poverty, Insecurity and Social Exclusion Service	None
Belgium	FIRM/IFDH – Federal Institute for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights	B
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina	A
Bulgaria	Commission for Protection Against Discrimination	B
Bulgaria	Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria	A
Croatia	Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia	A
Cyprus	Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman)	A
Czech Republic	Public Defender of Rights	None
Denmark	Danish Institute for Human Rights	A
Estonia	Chancellor for Justice of Estonia	A
Finland	Human Rights Centre and the Parliamentary Ombudsman	A
France	National Consultative Commission on Human Rights	A
Georgia	Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia	A
Germany	German Institute for Human Rights	A
Great Britain	Equality and Human Rights Commission	A
Greece	Greek National Commission for Human Rights	A
Hungary	Commissioner for Fundamental Rights	B
Ireland	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	A

Country	Institution	Accreditation Status
Kosovo*	Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo	None
Latvia	Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia	A
Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein Human Rights Association	None
Lithuania	Seimas Ombudsmen's Office	A
Luxembourg	Consultative Human Rights Commission of Luxembourg	A
Moldova	People's Advocate Office	A
Montenegro	Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro	B
Netherlands	Netherlands Institute for Human Rights	A
North Macedonia	Ombudsman of the Republic of North Macedonia	B
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	A
Norway	Norwegian National Human Rights Institution	A
Poland	Commissioner for Human Rights	A
Portugal	Portuguese Ombudsman	A
Romania	Romanian Institute for Human Rights	None
Scotland	Scottish Human Rights Commission	A
Serbia	Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia	A
Slovakia	Slovak National Centre for Human Rights	B
Slovenia	Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia	A
Spain	Ombudsman of Spain	A
Sweden	Swedish Institute for Human Rights	None
Switzerland	Swiss Human Rights Institution	None
Türkiye	Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye	B
Ukraine	Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights	A

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence



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