



ACTIVITY REPORT

AEDH

2015

**EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE DEFENCE OF
HUMAN RIGHTS**

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ABOUT US

Founded in 2000, the European Association for the defence of Human Rights (AEDH) is a European network of 32 human rights organisations based in 23 member states of the European Union and in Switzerland. Within a Europe where important choices are made on the European level concerning more than 500 million people, AEDH defends and promotes human rights, democracy and citizenship.

OBJECTIVES

AEDH works for:

- A democratic Europe in which citizens get a real power
- A Europe grounded on the respect of freedom of each and every person
- A Europe which maintains its concern for social equality
- A Europe respectful of the environment and engaged in sustainable development
- A Europe without discrimination
- A Europe open to the world and taking into account its international responsibilities

METHODS

AEDH

- Raises awareness and informs its members and citizens on EU policies having an impact on human rights;
- Brings its members together in the framework of its thematic priorities in order to develop analysis and common positions ;
- Defends its claims and recommendations towards European decisionmakers
- Joins collective actions of European networks in order to defend human rights together

THEMES

AEDH concentrates its actions in particular on:

- Economic, social and cultural rights
- Minority rights and the fight against discrimination
- Active and inclusive citizenship
- The right to asylum and the rights of migrants
- The right to privacy and the protection of personal data



*Pour une Europe des droits de l'Homme !
For a Europe of Human Rights!*

OUR METHODS

MONITORING OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

The close monitoring of European policies related to human rights is essential for improving the understanding of the EU's impact on fundamental rights and of the problems and risks and for the defence and protection of rights by citizens on the European level. AEDH follows the input in the legislative process of the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and of the European Parliament. It follows public hearings and relevant conferences organised by the institutions, experts and civil society.

AWARENESS RAISING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

AEDH informs members and citizens about EU policies and legislative developments related to human rights in Europe through press releases, thematic bulletins, newsletters, reports, its website and social media.

AEDH thematic working groups and joint seminars bringing together members of different EU member states are the framework for developing analysis and common positions. AEDH puts its member organisations in contact to share knowledge on national contexts, exchange best practises, inform and give trainings on European policies thus enabling AEDH members to integrate the EU dimension in their daily work and to raise awareness among citizens. This is also a source of dissemination of analysis and positions.

DIALOGUE WITH INSTITUTIONS AND ADVOCACY

AEDH makes its voice and the voice of its members heard by EU decision makers through position papers, open letters, campaigns, by answering to public consultations and organising conferences and meetings with key stakeholders.

- The dialogue with the European Parliament, only democratically elected European institution is particularly important for AEDH. Our association is often consulted for parliamentary reports and submits proposals of amendments to their authors.
- AEDH is a member of the structured dialogue « active citizenship group » of the European Commission and promotes in the group a participative, social and inclusive citizenship
- AEDH is a member of the civil society liaison group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) since 2007. The liaison group aims to encourage dialogue and cooperation between the EESC and the representatives of civil society networks and organisations. AEDH represents the domain of human rights.
- AEDH contributes to the work of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), being a member of the Fundamental Rights Platform. The platform consists of over 300 civil society organisations and aims to foster exchange of information and expertise. The civil society organisations are regularly invited to answer to public consultations of the Agency.
- AEDH is also one of the civil society organisations consulted by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

The voice of the AEDH is strengthened by its joint work with organisations with which it shares values and positions.

- The AEDH naturally interacts with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).
- Since June 2012, the AEDH is a full member of EuroMedRights (formerly the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)), a network that promotes and strengthens human rights and democratic reform in the Mediterranean neighbouring countries through cooperation between civil society organisations. AEDH participates in several working groups, «justice», «asylum» and «gender». Also, since 2015, AEDH is represented in its Executive Committee. For more information on EuroMedRights, see <http://euromedrights.org/>.
- The AEDH is also member of the Board of the European Civic Forum (ECF), a transnational network of over 100 associations and NGOs across 27 European countries actively working to promote civic and popular ownership of Europe. Interested in the European Civic Forum? Visit its website: <http://civic-forum.eu/en/>.
- The AEDH is also member of EPAM, the NGO Platform on asylum and immigration policies of the European Union. Regular meetings between the NGOs working on these topics allow members to share knowledge and expertise and develop common approaches, see <http://www.ngo-platform-asylum-migration.eu/>.
- AEDH is a founding member of Civil Society Europe, a permanent coordination of civil society at the European level which aims to promote horizontal exchanges between organizations and effective advocacy for equality, solidarity, integration and democracy. For more information on Civil Society Europe, see <http://civilsocietyeurope.eu/>.
- The informal network Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) – which AEDH is a member of – gathers NGOs working for the defence and promotion of Human rights, in particular in relations with the EU and third countries, <http://www.hrdn.eu/>.

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

AEDH acts for a European Union where the right to asylum and the rights of migrants are fully respected. Every asylum seeker has to be offered reception conditions that enable him/her to have a dignified standard of living throughout the asylum procedure. The integration of migrants and refugees must be a priority.

INCREASING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ON ASYLUM AND MIGRATION ISSUES

AEDH contributes to increasing public knowledge and awareness on developments relevant for the rights of migrants and refugees by publishing brief news, press releases and analysis on European political developments (EU institutions and member states). With its analysis, in particular with its monthly newsletter, AEDH seeks to enable citizens and civil society organisations to decode the issues at stake. In this field, AEDH often leads campaigns on specific objections or demands together with other European networks. Also, it supports the actions led by its members.

For more information, have a look at: <http://www.aedh.eu/-The-AEDH-and-the-Asylum-and-.html>.

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM IN THE CONTEXT OF EU REACTIONS TO THE "REFUGEE" CRISIS

Since its foundation, AEDH has been monitoring with a critical eye the developments of the asylum and migration policies of the EU and its member states. It criticises the European Union for the lack of solidarity of its asylum system letting the Southern member states alone deal with the arrival of migrants. AEDH has severely condemned the EU policy of closing its borders to migrants and concluding readmission agreements with third countries that contribute, in practice, to the externalisation of the right to asylum and causing thousands of migrants to opt for expensive and dangerous ways of mafia-type smugglers to reach the EU. AEDH acts for an asylum system that fully implements the guarantees of the Geneva Convention and the application of common norms to all member states. AEDH is objecting the concept of safe countries of origin and condemns the inequalities caused by the Dublin regulation and calls for its abolition.

These migration policies combined with several ongoing conflicts in the EU neighbourhood countries have led to a humanitarian emergency situation on the EU borders and in some member states from summer 2015 onwards.

AEDH has closely monitored the numerous summits and plans the EU designed to react to the ongoing "crisis" at its borders. Its publications such as policy papers and articles in its monthly newsletter have been disseminated to its members and the wider public. AEDH has also led campaigns towards the European institutions, in cooperation with networks representing European civil society (see <http://www.aedh.eu/Bridges-not-weapons-An-appeal-for.html>).

Most importantly, AEDH criticises:

- The lack of activating the directive on temporary protection designed for an increased influx of migrants, see e.g. AEDH's letter Europe, quo vadis? <http://www.aedh.eu/Europe-quo-vadis.html>
- The failure of the relocation mechanism showing the lack of solidarity and commitment of member states; insufficient commitments of member states to resettlement, see for example AEDH's comment on the European Agenda on Migration published by the Commission in May 2015: <http://www.aedh.eu/European-Agenda-on-Migration-the.html> ; AEDH's speech in the European Parliament on humanitarian visas: <http://www.aedh.eu/The-intervention-of-AEDH-s.html>.
- The failure of the Dublin System, source of inequalities between asylum seekers and of the treatment of persons that does not comply with requirements of human dignity. Several times, AEDH has called on abandoning the system.
- The externalisation of the right of asylum that tends to pushing migrants away from Europe.. Most notably, AEDH has mobilised against the appalling agreement between the EU and Turkey <http://www.aedh.eu/The-Turkey-European-Union.html>.

While AEDH deplores the EU migration policies, the association supports the numerous civil society initiatives calling for a reception without restrictions of refugees and condemn the generalised rejection of migrants characterised as economic migrants. For more information, see: <http://www.aedh.eu/Deaths-in-the-Mediterranean-as-the.html>.

AEDH insists on :

- The opening of legal pathways to reach the European territory through a real recognition of the right to family reunification,
- The abolition of the Dublin regulation in order to allow asylum seekers to freely choose the country in which they want to file their request
- The development of an approach granting humanitarian visas in the countries of departure of refugees
- The refusal of “trading” policies with third countries in the framework of mobility partnerships which do not comply with the real needs of the population of third countries

AEDH also calls for the abolition of short-term visas.

FRONTEXIT CAMPAIGN

As an international campaign of several associations, Frontexit was launched in 2013 with the objective of abolishing the EU agency Frontex because of the incompatibility of its actions with the respect of the rights of migrants and refugees. Through actions of investigation, litigations, raising awareness and political advocacy, the campaign calls for:

- The transparency of Frontex’s mandates, responsibilities and actions ;
- The suspension of the agency’s activities identified as contrary to human rights, especially maritime interception operations and group expulsions ;
- Enhanced control by the European Parliament of agreements signed between the agency and so-called ‘third’ countries.

For several months now, what is found by civil society organisations is worrying: the reinforcement of Frontex’s role with regards to expulsions from hotspots, increased autonomy at the European borders, consequent increase in budget, possible access to police data with the clear aim to fight terrorism, increased cooperation with countries that do not respect human rights... All this in the most total opacity.

By joining the Frontexit campaign, AEDH wants to join in the already participating associations with the capacities of its network and knowledge in order to work, all together, for different European migration policies, transparent, united and respectful of the rights and liberties of all.

The objections to the actions of Frontex are per-

fectly in line with the mission of AEDH to act for the opening of legal migration channels and reception of refugees. AEDH’s action is underpinned by the observation that any reinforcement of borders cannot discourage persons seeking protection, but is linked with the risk that those use even more dangerous channels; the numbers – published by Frontexit itself – are enough evidence.

For more information, see the AEDH communication on its accession to the campaign: <http://www.aedh.eu/AEDH-joins-the-Frontexit-campaign,3145.html> as well as the campaign website: www.frontexit.org.

MOBILISATION AGAINST THE CONFISCATION OF VALUABLES OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN DENMARK

Together with EuroMedRights and the International Federation for Human Rights, AEDH called on the Danish parliament to reject a draft law providing for the confiscation of asylum seekers’ valuables. The law goes against the human rights of migrants and contributes to the stigmatization of foreigners and xenophobia.

AEDH, EuroMedRights and FIDH letter: <http://www.aedh.eu/Rejecting-migrants-and-refugees-in.html>.

EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM

Every year, the European Migration Forum, organised by the European Commission and the EESC, brings together representatives of civil society organisations, local and regional authorities, Member States and EU institutions. Every year, a specific topic is discussed (family reunification, asylum, integration).

For further information on the Forum, see: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.immiContributions> to the consultations of EASO migration-forum.

CONTRIBUTION TO EASO CONSULTATIONS

AEDH has been invited to answer to the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)’s call for inputs on its Draft work program for 2017.

Read AEDH’s input: <http://www.aedh.eu/Reponse-de-l-AEDH-a-l-EASO-dans-le.html>

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

AEDH defends the right to privacy as fundamental right and acts for the protection of personal data. Security considerations, border protection, immigration control and the fight against terrorism cannot justify eroding the right to privacy and the protection of personal data.

INCREASING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ON DATA PROTECTION ISSUES

AEDH contributes to increasing public knowledge and awareness on developments relevant for the protection of personal data by publishing brief news and analysis on legislative procedures and jurisprudence that can be found at: <http://www.aedh.eu/-The-AEDH-and-personal-data-.html>.

STRENGTHENING THE CONVENTION N° 108 OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

This Convention is the first binding international instrument which protects the individual against abuses which may accompany the collection and processing of personal data and which seeks to regulate at the same time the transfrontier flow of personal data. In addition to providing guarantees in relation to the collection and processing of personal data, it restricts the processing of sensitive data (those relating to a person's race, political affiliation, health, religion, sexual life, criminal record, etc.). The Convention also enshrines the individual's right to know that information is stored on him or her and, if necessary, to have it corrected or erased.

Since 2011, AEDH has been a member with observer status of the Council of Europe's Bureau of the Consultative Committee tasked with the modernisation of Convention 108. In the process of the modernisation of the convention, AEDH has proposed amendments that would reinforce the protection of privacy and personal data, whether it involved the definition of sensitive data, consent for data collection, opening membership to inter-

national organisations, or mandatory protection for transfers to third countries. The new version of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS No. 108) has now been finalised and is still awaiting the vote of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The vote should take place only after the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation (the result of the revision of Directive 95/46/EC).

The T-PD Bureau notably works on recommendations concerning the protection of personal data in the field of PNR data, police data, health data and also in the framework of big data.

THE EU PNR: OPPOSING THE LARGE-SCALE COLLECTION OF AIR PASSENGER DATA

The EU PNR is designed to collect a range of personal information of all air passengers traveling from or to the EU territory that is to say at least 300 million people a year. Originally, the Council and the European Parliament committed to adopt the draft law by the end of 2015. AEDH strongly opposed the draft law and called on MEP to vote against it as this bulk collection of personal data does not respect the principles of necessity and proportionality and neither its effectiveness nor its added value compared to both the Schengen Information System (SIS) and the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) have been proven. Further to pressure from civil society, the vote of the EU PNR by the European Parliament has been delayed to the first semester 2016. AEDH will continue to engage with MEPs in order to prevent its adoption. AEDH's position can be found at: <http://www.aedh.eu/The-LIBE-committee-adopted-the,3130.html>.

FIGHTING THE CREATION OF THE SMART BORDERS SYSTEM

The smart border system has been proposed by the European Commission in 2013 with the announced aim to simplify and streamline the entry of foreign nationals on the territory of the EU. The legislative package is composed of two separate draft laws: an entry/exit system (EES) to record the date and place of entry and exit of third country nationals crossing the external border of the European Union with the aim to fight irregular immigration by automatically calculating the duration of stay of each person and triggering an alert when the deadline of the visa is exceeded and a

registered travelers programme (RTP) to allow third country nationals who travel frequently to the EU to use simplified border checks procedures. AEDH condemns the creation of such databases collecting and using systematically sensitive personal data as are biometric data and denounces the lack of necessity and proportionality, purpose limitation and the excessive data retention period. Furthermore, the proposal does not respect the principle of non-discrimination. AEDH engages with policy makers to raise awareness of these violations and tries to mobilise civil society. In October 2015, AEDH contributed to the public consultation of the European Commission on Smart Borders. You can find its contribution at: <http://www.aedh.eu/Public-Consultation-on-the-Smart,3293.html>

CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

AEDH acts for a democratic and transparent European Union in which citizens have real power. The European Union has to ensure that member states respect the values of democracy, rule of law and human rights. AEDH promotes an inclusive and social, residence-based European citizenship. AEDH aims at encouraging the participation of citizens on the European level and defends the regular dialogue of European Institutions with civil society as provided for by article 11 of the Treaty on the European Union.

EU action plan against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives and the directive on combating terrorism. AEDH highlighted in particular the worrying trend of widening administrative power at the expense of judicial control and the restrictions to the right to assembly. You can read the full speech in French at: <http://www.aedh.eu/815-Devant-l-urgence-que.html>

Joint Civil Society Statement: Counterterrorism: The EU and its member states must respect and protect human rights and the rule of law

PROMOTING COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris in January and November 2015, both the EU and member states have initiated new draft laws to counter terrorism. In particular in France we have seen a profound change with the renewed state of emergency, but also Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and the UK have adopted several wide-reaching new anti-terrorism policies. AEDH is promoting counter-terrorism measures that are respecting human rights by advising policy makers and informing the wider public. The following activities have been carried out:

AEDH statement on November 2015 attacks in Paris

Following the November attacks 2015 in Paris, AEDH called on public authorities to comply in their reactions to the rule of law and to strictly avoid stigmatisation of someone due to its suspected or actual origin, see at: <http://www.aedh.eu/November-attacks-in-Paris-nothing.html>.

Participation in the study group meeting of the EESC/SOC on the European agenda on security

AEDH shared its views with the study group of EESC in charge of preparing the EESC avis on the two draft directives on counterterrorism, the

AEDH joined a coalition of civil society organisations in addressing clear recommendations to the European institutions how to respect and protect human rights when designing counterterrorism policies. The coalition highlighted the need to respect the right to be free from torture, the principle of non-refoulement, the right to liberty and security, the right to fair trial, the right to privacy and the freedom of religion among others. You can read the statement at: <https://edri.org/joint-civil-society-statement-on-counter-terrorism-and-human-rights/>.

PROMOTING EU ACTION FOR THE RESPECT OF DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN EU MEMBER STATES

AEDH acts for a European Union that ensures that member states are respecting the values of democracy, rule of law and human rights as stipulated in article 2 of the treaty of the European Union. Since 2014, the EU has a new instrument at its disposal which is the rule of law mechanism that can be initiated by the European Commission. AEDH advocates for the use of available mechanisms in order to enforce the respect of fundamental values by member states.

Joint statement on Poland: The collapse of Polish democracy

After the election of a new government in November 2015, several worrying political decisions have been taken limiting rights and freedoms and impacting on democratic life in Poland. AEDH and its Polish member Otwarta Rzeczpospolita have issued a joint statement condemning the restriction of fundamental rights by the Polish government and calling on the EU to ensure continued action after its activation of the rule of law framework. You can read the statement at: <http://www.aedh.eu/The-collapse-of-Polish-democracy.html>.

Call for EU action to safeguard democracy and rule of law in member states

Together with other organisations of Civil Society Europe a newly founded association gathering

European networks with the aim of strengthening cooperation among civil society, AEDH published a call for EU action in view of the proposed and adopted legislation of the Polish government. One key request of the undersigning organisations is the call for a regular review of fundamental rights and values in all EU member states by the European Commission. You can read the call at: <http://www.aedh.eu/Call-for-EU-action-to-safeguard.html>.

Contribution to the consultation of the European Commission on EU citizenship

AEDH has contributed to the consultation of the European Commission on EU citizenship. In its contribution, AEDH has underlined the urgent need to respect and protect the rights of EU citizens, in particular the freedom of movement, through the use of appropriate mechanisms. You can read AEDH's input to the consultation at: <http://www.aedh.eu/Contribution-to-the-consultation.html>.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

AEDH acts for a European Union that guarantees economic, social and cultural rights and promotes a European social residence-based citizenship.

Fighting for another economic and social policy by the European Union

AEDH regularly takes position on the current orientation of the EU political and social policy through its press releases, its analysis and interventions during conferences. AEDH is also a member of AlterSummit that gathers trade unions organisations, NGOs and social movements in order to defend the Social Europe.

Seminar on Poverty: Changing the language in order to change policies

On November 16, AEDH hosted a seminar on the topic "Poverty : changing the language in order to change policies" which brought together human rights organisations and European civil society actors in order to discuss the development of poverty in Europe and explore means for deconstructing stereotypes related to poverty that are used in political and everyday language.

Conference report of the seminar: <http://www.aedh.eu/Report-Seminar-AEDH-on-poverty-16.html>.

GENDER EQUALITY

AEDH stands up against restrictions to the rights of women and promotes equal rights for everyone.

Discrimination against and unequal rights for women is still a widespread reality in the European Union. In particular in recent years, we have seen a setback in women's rights in several member states.

AEDH has reacted to this development with the creation of a working group on gender equality gathering representatives of its member organisations and individual members.

AEDH monitors the situation on the EU and national level and informs its members on relevant developments for gender equality. Since 2015, AEDH is an active member of the working group on gender equality of EuroMedRights bringing together women's rights' defenders from North and South of the Mediterranean.

COMMUNICATION

INTERNET WEBSITE, FACEBOOK PAGE AND TWITTER ACCOUNT

AEDH's internet website, Facebook page and twitter account give an overview of the human rights situation in the EU by referring to the legislative developments, to the research centers' analysis and statistics, to the AEDH and her 32 members' activities and publications. For each topic, the website contains the essential of the European legislation, the positions and activities of the AEDH and of members and partners at a regional, national and European level.

THE NEWSLETTER

The monthly AEDH newsletter reports the main events related to human rights in the European Union reflecting developments on the European level and in the different member states. It provides an overview of European legislative news, along with updates on activities and positions of AEDH and its members.

The newsletter is published in English and French and disseminated to about 1000 subscribers, including members, civil society contacts and citizens. Many of our members and partners also redistribute the newsletter to their contacts, which greatly increases its actual circulation.

PRESS RELEASES AND ANALYSES

AEDH regularly takes a stand at the European level in order to inform European citizens and to call out the political decision-makers when there is an infringement or a risk of infringement of fundamental rights. By its press releases and analyses, AEDH tries to encourage citizens to seize the opportunity to debate on big European issues and to get involved in the democratic life of the EU.

AEDH often releases joint statements with its members' organisations to draw the attention on violations of Fundamental Rights occurring in a member state.

All press releases are widely disseminated to European citizens, parliamentarians, representatives of the European institutions, civil society partners and journalists thanks to the publication in different languages: systematically in English and in French and often also in Italian, German or Spanish.

AEDH IN THE NEWS

AEDH had a large echo in the European and national media (newspapers, radio, TV), for example in Radio France Internationale, el diario, taz, woxx, the blog wakeupinfo, Alternatives économiques and more.

AEDH MEMBERS

AEDH's strength comes from the knowledge and experience of its members. Its expanding network reinforces its expertise and the legitimacy of its actions towards the European institutions. Affiliation with the AEDH benefits members by enhancing their understanding of European policies, facilitating the exchange of best practices and supporting joint work and a united front on a European level.

In 2015, AEDH has 32 member organisations in 24 European countries, including

three European networks that are partner members and one observer member.

AEDH also boasts a growing number of individual members that embody its commitment to promoting a European civic movement for human rights. The fees paid by member organisations and individuals are essential for that AEDH can operate on a daily basis and commit to building a Europe of human rights. For information on becoming a member of the AEDH please go to <http://www.aedh.eu/Become-a-member-.html>

FULL MEMBERS IN 2015

AUSTRIA	Österreichische Liga für Menschenrechte	FINLAND	Ihmisoikeuslitto – Finnish League for Human Rights
BELGIUM	Ligue des droits de l'Homme Liga voor Mensenrechten	FRANCE	Ligue française pour la défense des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen
BULGARIA	Association for the Defense of Human Rights - Bulgaria (ADHR-BG)	GERMANY	Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte
CROATIA	Croatian Law Center	GREECE	Ligue hellénique pour les droits de l'Homme
CYPRUS	KISA – Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism	HUNGARIA	Hungarian Helsinki Committee
CZECH REPUBLIC	Czech Helsinki Committee	ITALY	Asociazione Recreativa i Culturale Italiana (ARCI) Lega Italiana per i diritti dell'Uomo Unione Forense per la Tutela dei Diritti dell'Uomo
ESTONIA	Legal Information Centre for Human Rights		

LATVIA	Latvian Human Rights Committee	PARTNER MEMBERS	EDRI Génération 112 Solidar
LITHUANIA	Lithuanian Human Rights Association Lithuanian Human Rights League		
LUXEMBOURG	Action Luxembourg Ouvert et Solidaire – Ligue des droits de l'Homme (ALOS-LDH)		
MALTA	Malta Association of Human Rights		
THE NETHERLANDS	Liga voor de Rechten van de Mens		
POLAND	Otwarta Rzeczpospolita – Open Republic		
PORTUGAL	Liga Portuguesa dos Direitos Humanos – Civitas		
ROMANIA	Asociatia Pro Democratia		
SPAIN	Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía (APDHA) Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya (IDHC)		
SWITZERLAND	Ligue suisse des droits de l'Homme		
UNITED KINGDOM	Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure in Scotland – BEMIS		

SPOTLIGHT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF SOME OF OUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS IN 2015

Latvian Human Rights Committee (LHRC)

The most prominent LHRC publication in 2015 was the collection of articles «Legal and factual situation of national minorities in Latvia». In shadow reporting, the committee's most notable work was a NGO submission for the UN Human Rights Council. It was a part of the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Latvia. The LHRC's work has also been credited by the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism in a report submitted to the UN General Assembly.

Among the international conferences, the Committee presented current issues on Latvia at OSCE Human Dimension Meetings in Warsaw and Vienna. In Riga, the LHRC organised a press conference in October, dedicated to the anniversary of mass statelessness. The Committee also organised a conference in December that was more focused on language policy as well as on an overview of what the LHRC and the guests had done in 2014 (including writings, publications, as well as various litigations etc.).

Human Rights Institute of Catalonia (HRIC)

As part of its 2015 advocacy activities, the Institute focused on the monitoring and reporting of the situation of human rights in Spain to the international protection mechanism such as within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of Spain, or with the Human Rights Committee and CEDAW. The Institute also conducted monitoring and dissemination activities of the ECHR case-law on Spain and provided advice and support to public administrations and civil society.

The Institute's main research activities in 2015 on Human Rights approach to development were: Human Rights and Development, Human Rights-based Approach to Development Cooperation, and The Right to Work of Rural Women in the Gaza Strip, Mainstreaming the Gender and Human Rights based approach in a context of the Arab world and Humanitarian Aid.

The HRIC also implemented education and training activities such as its 33rd Course on Human Rights: Human Rights as a tool for social transformation, as well as other trainings on specific human rights issues.

Human Rights League Belgium (LDH)

One of the activities of the Frenchspeaking Human Rights League Belgium (LDH) in 2015 consisted of a campaign on privacy, with several actions, analyses and debates on data protection, on the tensions between privacy and security needs, or on professional secrecy issues. Following an annulment appeal introduced by LDH, amongst others, the Belgian Constitutional Court invalidated the bill obliging the generalized storage of telecom metadata. This constitutional ruling highlighted the need to avoid infinite extension of mass surveillance which illustrates the growing disproportion between the respect of privacy and the legitimate needs for security.

Regarding the fight against terrorism which has been at the heart of the debates in 2015, several analyses and actions have been led by LDH, in particular concerning the 18 measures that were announced by the Belgian government following the attacks in Paris. These measures have been critically assessed with regards to the respect of fundamental rights, of individual liberties and to the existing laws on counterterrorism.

In view of the second universal periodic assessment that Belgium was intended to pass at the beginning of 2016, LDH gathered several Belgian and international NGOs in order to present a state of play of the situation of fundamental rights in Belgium. This mobilization led to a common communication to the press concerning the work that had been done as well as a presentation of the content of these reports to the UN in Geneva by a few of them (including LDH).

Finally, in the field of migration, a work undertaken by the "Foreigners" commission of LDH led to the publication of a "White Paper on residence permits for medical reasons (9 ter)". Supported by a large coalition of associations, this document contains a critical analysis of the situation, testimonies from individuals whose regularization demands are undergoing or have been rejected, as well as recommendations directly addressed to the persons in charge (Secretary of State on Asylum and Migration, Foreigners Office).

The Italian League of Human Rights

In 2015 the Italian League of Human Rights was committed in a series of activities and awareness campaigns in relation to the promotion and defense of Human Rights. Here is a list of Lidu's activities in 2015 which will all continue in 2016.

Lidu joined the International campaign "Stop TTIP" against the lack of transparency in the negotiations and the risks associated to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Lidu got in touch EU Members who will vote on the TTP final draft. Face to a shaming information campaign¹, Lidu wrote many Press Releases dispatched to social networks, and published on its Web site.

Lidu has joined the campaign "Free Biram Dah Abeid" for the immediate release of Mr. Biram Dah Abeid, President of Ira Mauritania, who received the United Nations' Prize for Human Rights in 2013. He is now unjustly imprisoned about his anti-slavery campaign led by his Association.²

The Campaign "MovingRights4Iran" started in November 2015 during Rouhani's visit in Italy. It was arranged with the contribution of #DiteloRouhani ("#TellItToRouhani), promoted by Lidu with Nessuno tocchi Caino Equality Italia, Radical Party, Associazione Luca Coscioni, A Buon Diritto, Arci, ArciGay, Radicali Italiani, Certi Diritti, ArciLesbica, Coalizione Italiana Libertà e Diritti Civili, E-raonlus, Non c'è Pace senza Giustizia. The initiative aims at denouncing the permanent Human Rights violations made by the Iranian Government.

"Progetto Scuola" is a project promoted by Lidu, in association with local Committees. Its purpose is the promotion of the Human Rights' culture in the primary and secondary school. Lidu's main promoting tools are conferences and debates about Human Rights protection, organized in cooperation with teachers.

¹ The letter from LIDU's President, Alfredo Arpaia, to the President of Italian Republic is available on : <http://www.liduonlus.org>

² For more information see : <http://www.liduonlus.org/2015/Ilaria%20NespolitavolarotondaMauritania.html> and http://www.opinione.it/politica/2015/11/27/nespoli_politica-27-11.aspx

Portuguese League of Human Rights / CIVITAS

During the year 2015, the Portuguese League of Human Rights / CIVITAS – an organization recognized to be of public utility – has developed its activity focusing on two main areas: migration and gender equality.

Thus, it participated in working sessions and initiatives conducted by institutions to which it belongs, nominally the Human Rights Council of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Commission for Gender Equality (CIG) and the Commission for Equality and against Racial Discrimination of the High Commission for immigration and Intercultural dialogue (ACIDI).

Moreover, several of its members took part in conferences organised by schools and civic institutions for instance.

The Portuguese League of Human Rights commemorates Human Rights Day on 10 December each year. In 2014, this celebration was of particular importance since about three hundred people followed the transmission of video messages sent by António Guterres (who was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees at that time) and Malala Yousefzai (The Nobel Peace Prize laureate).

At an international level, the Portuguese League of Human Rights is mainly active in the European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (AEDH) and the Worldwide Movement for Human Rights (FIDH). Indeed, in May 2015, its President participated in conferences they organised in Bucharest and Dublin respectively. Besides, it recently applied for EuroMed Rights membership.

Simultaneously, the Portuguese League of Human Rights / CIVITAS created a commission aimed at strengthening its links with Portuguese means of information and regularly supplying its website, particularly by translating and transposing texts and releases from AEDH and FIDH.

The French League of Human Rights (LDH)

France: democracy and solidarity

From 11 January to 13 November, 2015 has been a year of tears and blood. The French League (LDH) shared the tributes to all victims and their families. In a context of urgent political solutions and of threats to the rights of individuals, LDH has continuously defended fundamental rights and principles – that are the reason for its existence – against all accusations coming from various political horizons:

- Terrorist attacks are crimes that cannot find any justification; the backers of these attacks will face the law since the direct perpetrators have generally committed suicide in the attacks;
- Fighting terrorists cannot be done by weakening democratic rights through exceptional measures such as the state of alert or the recourse to the deprivation of nationality;
- The constitutionalisation of these measures is a politicians' decision that does not strengthen in any way the efficiency of the response;
- Stigmatisation of certain parts of the population because of their supposed or real origin represents a trap that serves the interests of terrorists whose ultimate objective is to stir hatred and fragmentation in our societies;
- Such abuses have fueled racism and xenophobia and the government's strategy - instead of fighting far-right parties – is largely responsible for it;
- The development of mass surveillance means, both physically and electronically, is not only threatening our fundamental rights but the efficiency of such means still has not been demonstrated.

During this period, LDH has always followed this approach and made the argument that all actions aiming at reinforcing individuals' and states' security should not weaken essential public liberties and rights.

GOVERNANCE AND FUNCTIONING

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The annual General Assembly composed of AEDH members defines the policy of the association, validates the financial report and the activity report. The General Assembly decides on the integration of new organisations and elects the executive board.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board is elected by the General Assembly for a two-year term. It is responsible for implementing the AEDH's general policy, as determined by the General Assembly.

On the 1st of April, 2015, the Executive Board elected in June 2014 was composed of the following members:

DOMINIQUE GUIBERT, chairman, Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH), France

PHILIPPOS MITLETTON, vice-chairman - Ligue hellénique des droits de l'Homme (HLHR)

CATHERINE TEULE, vice-chairwoman Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH), France

VAN VLIET GERARD, vice-chairman - Liga voor de Rechten van de mens (LVRM), Pays-Bas

MOHAMED ZYAD, secretary-general - Liga voor de Rechten van de Mens (LVRM), Pays-Bas

RAFAEL LARA, secretary-general - Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos Andalucía (APDHA)

KNUT ALBRECHT, secretary-general Internationale Liga für Menschenrechte

DAVID BUSUTTIL, treasurer, Malta Association of Human Rights (MAHR)

MARIA VITTORIA ARPAIA, member - Lega Italiana Dei Diritti Dell'Uomo (LIDU)

MARIA STEFANIE CATALETA, member - Lega Italiana Dei Diritti Dell'Uomo (LIDU)

RUMIANA DECHEVA, member - European Association for the Defence of Human Rights-Bulgaria (EADHR)

STEFANIE GRYSOON, member - Liga voor Mensenrechten (LvM), Belgique

EMILIE PESSELIER, member - représentante des membres individuels

MARIJA STACIOKIENE, member - Lithuanian Human Rights League (LHRL)

STOIL TZITZELKOV, member - représentant des membres individuels

TONY VAN LOON, member - Liga voor Mensenrechten (LvM), Belgique

ROBERTO VISMARA, member - Lega Italiana Dei Diritti Dell'Uomo (LIDU)

ANGELIKA WATZL, member - Österreichische Liga für Menschenrechte, Autriche

TANVEER PARNEZ, member Black and Ethnic Minorities in Scotland (BEMIS)

MARYSE ARTIGUELONG, member Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH), France

ALEKSEJS DIMITROV, member -Lithuanian Human Rights Committee

MANUEL MALHEIROS, member -Liga Portuguesa dos Direitos Humanos - Civitas

HONORARY CHAIRMEN

PIERRE BARGE, Honorary Chairmen LDH France

DAN VAN RAEMDONCK, Honorary Chairmen, LDH Belgique

EMPLOYEES (MAY 1ST 2015)

YVONNE EBNER, coordinator

EMMANUELLE DECLEVE, Financial and Administrative Officer

INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

AEDH regularly takes on three to four interns to work at its headquarters. They provide invaluable support for the AEDH's daily work. The AEDH would like to thank Elena Bosshardt, Marius Jammes, Anaïs Kintgen, Mickael Molé, Matthieu Moulonguet, Elvina Rousseau and Suzanne Seiller for their contributions in 2015.

AEDH is first and foremost an association for

citizens and for active citizenship. It relies primarily on voluntary activism for the majority of its operations. In addition to executive board members, AEDH depends on the support of numerous volunteers for many tasks, including translating publications, interpreting at events, legal and accounting activities and even contributing to specific projects and actions

AEDH WOULD LIKE TO EXTENDS ITS SINCERE THANKS TO:

Mathieu Baudouin
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 Rhonda Campbell
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 Danielle Conge
 Isha Dalaya
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FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2015 AND BEYOND.

FINANCIAL MEANS 2015

Public funding	83.153,27
European Commission	
DG Communication, Europe for citizens	83.153,27
Membership fees	8.148,00
Membership fees member organisations	5.345,00
Membership fees individual members	2.803,00
Donations	13.524,20
Foundations	15.000
Total	119.825,47