

The European Union (EU) has long been a major source of funding for the United Nations Human Rights programme. In 2010, voluntary contributions from the European Commission (EC) and EU Member States combined amounted to USD 58.5 million. This was over half of contributions made to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human rights (OHCHR).

For the past ten years, the contributions from the EC have enabled OHCHR to support and strengthen international and regional mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights, justice and the rule of law.



Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission

A TWO-PHASE COOPERATION

In 2000, world leaders recognized the link between human rights, good governance and development in the Millennium Declaration. The EU and OHCHR work together to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through projects supported by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), for which OHCHR has been a key partner since 2007.

Between 2002 and 2006, EC funding of approximately 4-5 million euros a year was provided to OHCHR through the EIDHR. This supported specific thematic projects, such as UN special procedures and treaty bodies, national human rights institutions, indigenous populations and gender equality. Contributions from the EC were also allocated to activities on the ground, including in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico, Nepal and Uganda.

Since 2007, through agreements renewed annually, the EC contributes 4 million euros on average each year, entirely free of earmarking, meaning that the funds are not allocated to specific activities. These agreements allow greater flexibility in the management of funds and increase efficiency in implementing activities.

This new arrangement strengthens the partnership between the EC and the UN human rights office, based on common human rights priorities and strategies, as well as mutual trust based on a better understanding of the procedures of both institutions.

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS TOGETHER

Treaty bodies

Between 2003 and 2009, the UN Human Rights office developed two projects co-funded by the EC aimed at assisting countries implement recommendations made by the UN treaty bodies charged with monitoring compliance with international human rights conventions. Results included: (i) representatives from civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and the media developed action plans to implement treaty body recommendations; (ii) national networks of human rights defenders and civil society organizations involved in implementing treaty body recommendations were created in several countries; and (iii) a DVD containing documentation and training materials on the treaty body system was produced for training purposes -10,000 copies were distributed.

Film project

In 2008, with a contribution of 1.2 million Euros, the EC co-financed the production of 22 short stories by leading filmmakers commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The series, titled "Stories on Human Rights by Filmmakers, Artists and Writers", was complemented by a book featuring the works of Nobel Prize winners. The films were shown at public events in the lead-up to the 60th anniversary, including international films festivals, and were distributed worldwide through civil society networks, TV broadcasters and the Web. The messages conveyed in this series appeal to universal audiences and their impact continues to resonate.



Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development

Special activities

- *Short documentaries against discrimination, 2010:*

Two short films were produced on the theme of anti-discrimination (i.e. "HIV and migrants" and "Maternal mortality and Human Rights"). These continue to be distributed, including through the Web.

- *"Speak Up, Stop Discrimination", Human Rights Day 2010:*

The EU and OHCHR jointly celebrated Human Rights Day in Brussels, Belgium, with a focus on the role of everyday human rights defenders in ending all forms of discrimination.

- *Activities in 2011:*

With EU funds, OHCHR's Office in Kyrgyzstan is contributing to the prevention of human rights violations, inter-ethnic reconciliation and the fight against impunity by overseeing national policies and legislative processes in that country. A video telling the story of a torture victim's quest for justice in Kyrgyzstan documents one of the facets of this joint project and is available on OHCHR's website. In addition, an interactive computer game, developed for children to better understand basic human rights concepts, is also available on-line.

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reg. nr. F11/11, supplied by UPM.



Cover photo by Naske Sándor

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European Union – United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR)

**A DECADE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS PROMOTION
(2001-2011)**

