

## HELLENIC REPUBLIC

### GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Urgent Appeal of the European Group of NHRIs to EU Institutions and Member States regarding the EU Fundamental Rights Agency</b></p>
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The European Group of National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (NHRIs), convened in Athens on September 28-29 2006, reiterates its strong support for:

- the establishment of the Fundamental Rights Agency as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007, in accordance with the conclusions of the last European council;
- the efforts to settle outstanding issues in a way that is most favourable to the effective safeguard and promotion of fundamental rights in the EU.

More specifically, it underlines the necessity for the Agency to play a significant role in the area of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar (police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters), in conformity with the Court of Justice case law, according to which respect for fundamental rights within the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar is an obligation for both Member States and EU institutions. Furthermore, omitting the Agency's role in this field would seriously undermine both its own credibility and the credibility of the EU.

The European Group of NHRIs firmly supports the adoption of a Declaration to the effect that the Council is not precluded from 'calling on' the Agency to assist it in fulfilling its task under Article 7(1) TEU.

The European Group of NHRIs stresses once more the necessity for this Agency to be independent from EU institutions and Member States, and to have a remit that will enable it to contribute to the effective safeguard and

promotion of fundamental rights as the foundation of the EU (Article 6(1) TEU), and to respond to the expectations and concerns of those who live in the EU, in particular at this crucial moment for fundamental rights.

29 September 2006