



GREEK NATIONAL
COMMISSION FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS
(GNCHR)



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE GNCHR, MARIA GAVOUNELI	6
A YEAR AT A GLANCE.....	11
Texts.....	12
Education-Training Seminars	12
GNCHR PEOPLE	13
Composition of the GNCHR seventh term (2019-2022).....	14
<i>Bureau.....</i>	14
<i>Sections.....</i>	15
<i>Female Representation.....</i>	16
<i>Plenary Composition.....</i>	18
Staff	21
<i>Specialised Scientific Staff.....</i>	21
<i>Administrative Staff.....</i>	22
<i>Interns.....</i>	23
GNCHR; THE INDEPENDENT ADVISORY BODY TO THE STATE ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AND PROMOTION AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (NHRI) IN GREECE.....	24
GNCHR: the independent advisory body to the State	25
GNCHR; the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)	25
GNCHR; the key idea behind its establishment	26
GNCHR; its main mission	27
GNCHR; Independence and Pluralism.....	27
<i>Persons designated by the GNCHR to participate in collective State administration bodies</i>	28
GNCHR; similar NHRIs and international action	30
GNCHR and the UN Paris Principles translation.....	31
PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT NATIONAL LEVEL	36
Main thematic priorities of the GNCHR in 2020	37
<i>Human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	38
<i>Refugees-migrants.....</i>	39
<i>Protection of childhood</i>	43
<i>Persons with disabilities.....</i>	45

<i>Prevention of torture</i>	45
<i>Citizenship</i>	46
<i>Women</i>	46
<i>Tackling Racism and Intolerance</i>	47
<i>Labour trafficking</i>	47
<i>Police brutality</i>	48
<i>Detention Conditions and Education in Prison</i>	49
<i>Cultural heritage</i>	51
<i>Conscientious Objectors</i>	52
The GNCHR as a bridge builder between the State and the Civil Society	53
<i>The GNCHR as interlocutor with National Authorities</i>	53
<i>The GNCHR as interlocutor with Civil Society</i>	58
PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL	62
Contribution to UN Bodies	63
<i>UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)</i>	65
<i>Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)</i>	65
<i>UN General Assembly</i>	65
<i>Human Rights Council (HRC)</i>	66
<i>UNWG on Arbitrary Detention</i>	66
<i>Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)</i>	66
Contribution to the Bodies of the Council of Europe	67
<i>Committee of Ministers</i>	67
<i>European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)</i>	67
<i>Cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)</i>	67
Responding to requests for information and completing questionnaire surveys	68
Activities and Cooperation with Similar Commissions and NHRI Networks of other States	69
<i>Activities and Cooperation with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)</i>	70
<i>Activities and Cooperation with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)</i>	70
FOSTERING A CULTURE OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	72

Raising public awareness.....	73
<i>Actions / Initiatives to promote Human Rights.....</i>	<i>74</i>
<i>Participation in workshops and other events on the promotion of human rights.....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>GNCHR Press Releases.....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Interviews.....</i>	<i>81</i>
Human Rights Education and Training	82
<i>Pursuant to the mission entrusted to it by the Greek legislator, regarding the cultivation of respect for human rights within the educational system as well as the development for initiatives for raising public and media awareness of matters of respect for human rights, the GNCHR reiterates that human rights education constitutes per se a fundamental human right, from which derives the obligation of both the NHRIs and the public or private actors, active in the field of human rights, to develop specific educational programmes and initiatives focused on the promotion of human rights.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>It's for all these reasons, after all, that human rights education has been included in the hardcore of the GNCHR mission. More specifically, acknowledging that the cornerstone of human rights education is to launch and integrate international human rights standards and practices into people's daily lives, the GNCHR has taken the following initiatives, in 2020:.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Annual (Open) Seminar Series entitled, "Training in human rights", organised at the premises of the Athens Bar Association (ΔΣΑ) (Second Series, October 2019 - February 2020)</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Training programmes for professionals.....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Training programmes in schools.....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Training programmes for Higher Education Institutions Students.....</i>	<i>84</i>
Encouraging ratification of international Human Rights instruments.....	85
Cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) for the translation into Greek of the Court's factsheets.....	86
Since being a "natural ally" of all institutions and monitoring mechanisms of the Council of Europe for the promotion and protection of human rights, including therefore the ECtHR, the GNCHR helps to enhance the effectiveness of the Court's case-law by intervening at both stages of its production:.....	86

prior the delivery of judgements, with a view to prevent and inform about violations and after the delivery of judgements, by acting as a facilitator in the execution of judgements and the prevention of recurrent violations..	86
It can hence be considered that the cooperation between the GNCHR and the ECtHR is multilevel and comprises:	86
The translation on behalf of the GNCHR of the ECtHR's Factsheets, available on the official website of the Court into the Greek language.....	86
Acknowledging the importance of these Factsheets, on December 2015, the GNCHR, in cooperation with the ECtHR, took the initiative to provide them translated into Greek, contributing that way to the dissemination of the ECHR case-law in our country.....	86
Research in the field of Human Rights.....	87
IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GNCHR WORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS	89
At national level.....	90
<i>Impact and effectiveness of the GNCHR recommendations in law-making.....</i>	<i>90</i>
At International and European Level.....	90
<i>References by the UN bodies to the work accomplished by the GNCHR</i>	<i>90</i>
3. NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	91
INTRODUCTION	92
ALLOCATION OF THE GNCHR RESOURCES.....	95
GNCHR Financing.....	96
Allocation of Resources.....	96
LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	97
Law 2667/1998 (Government Gazette A 281/18.12.1998) establishing the GNCHR	98
The Regulation of the GNCHR.....	98

MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE GNCHR, MARIA GAVOUNELI

Maria Gavouneli
President of the Greek National
Commission of Human Rights



2020 was a difficult year for Human Rights all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictive measures imposed to deal with it, caused an unprecedented health, economic, social and humanitarian crisis worldwide, therefore aggravating the already existing systemic disparities, discrimination and marginalisation and disproportionately affecting those populations that are most vulnerable.

In view of this unprecedented health crisis, the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR), the National Institution for the protection of Human Rights in Greece, throughout the pandemic period, held very frequently on-line meetings with the participation of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, involved in the decision-making process, in order to deal with the new challenges in the most efficient way possible, assess the impact of the restrictive policy measures on human rights and democratic values, provide the Greek government with appropriate advice on the protection of the core human rights, as well as to raise public awareness of human rights issues and risks deriving from their violation due to the pandemic. Moreover, to this end, in May 2020, the GNCHR published a Report stressing the need for protection of human rights when taking measures to address COVID-19. The above mentioned Report, included recommendations to the Greek State, highlighting the impact of the restrictive measures imposed by the Government in order to deal with the pandemic, on human rights of vulnerable population groups including migrants and refugees, unaccompanied minors, Roma, women and children victims of domestic violence, prisoners and people with disabilities.

Acknowledging that human rights put people at the centre, the GNCHR underlined at a very early stage that the adoption of an approach as human rights-friendly as possible, can ensure the best results in addressing the pandemic challenge. Only a human rights-based approach, could lead to an effective response to the crisis caused by the pandemic.

The GNCHR, in full knowledge of its constitutional role, highlighted a number of key human rights issues arising in the present circumstances. The main points of concern of the GNCHR were the vulnerability of the population groups indicated in its positions and the institutional importance of these issues.

An illustrative example of the above mentioned, is the Contribution of the GNCHR in the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in relation to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, pointing out the main challenges our country has to deal with in implementing the Convention. In addition, fulfilling its mission as a monitoring mechanism to ensure the State's compliance with its international obligations and in order to submit a comprehensive Report, the GNCHR not only followed the guidelines of the UN Committee on the structure and content of the alternative reports, but also held a hearing of stakeholders and persons with the aim of providing as comprehensive and independent an assessment as possible, of the progress made and the difficulties encountered in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The GNCHR expressed publicly its opinion, following complaints regarding disproportional use of force by the Hellenic Police and policy proposals by the Minister of Citizen Protection, regarding use of surveillance cameras, during police operations, reiterating that public security is one of the objectives of the Constitution to be achieved and fundamental prerequisite for living in a democratic society. At the same time, the GNCHR highlighted that the principle of legality is a safeguard for the practical respect for human rights. The GNCHR immediately noted that every public body exercising State authority and especially the Hellenic Police, as in position of power, bears a great responsibility for which it should be held specifically accountable, thus safeguarding that the exclusive legitimate force, shall never exceed the minimum necessary having regard to the specific circumstances of the individual case under consideration.

Besides, the GNCHR delivered a Statement in relation to the Review of asylum and immigration policies and the protection of human rights at the EU's borders, calling on the Greek State to immediately halt the entrapment of applicants for international protection, in the eastern Aegean islands and remove the decision to suspend the registration of asylum applications and automatically return newly arrived aliens to their countries of origin or transit, which entered into force on 1 March 2020. Meanwhile, the GNCHR submitted its Observations on the Bill of Ministry for Migration and Asylum, entitled: "Improvement of immigration legislation, amendment of provisions of laws 4636/2019 (Government Gazette A 169), 4375/2016 (Government Gazette A 51), 4251/2014 (Government Gazette A 80)". In particular, the GNCHR stressed that the amendment of law 4636/2019 just four months after it came into force (1.1.2020), did not fulfil the very purpose set out by the legislator when adopting this law, namely, the consolidation of fragmented legislative provisions regulating the provision of international protection in Greece. Furthermore, the GNCHR noted that, as demonstrated by the prior practice on the part of Greece, successive changes in the organisation and functioning of administrative services will inevitably lead to further delays in

procedures that should be accelerated, under the provisions of the law in question. Furthermore, the GNCHR highlighted that the proposal for legislative changes was made while urgent measures to address Covid-19 had been taken in Greece, affecting the functioning of Services, access to asylum procedures and reception and accommodation conditions for applicants for international protection.

Three Statements were also issued by the GNCHR, regarding the case of the transfer of V. Dimakis, in which it called on the State, to ensure that Vasilis Dimakis access to university education was restored as soon as possible, given that his life was at imminent risk. V. Dimakis alleged to have been transferred to another prison, as a result of protesting against the competent authorities' failure to decongest prisons during the pandemic, without having committed any disciplinary offence. Therefore, he was unable to continue attending his classes at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPIA). However, the GNCHR had to reiterate its positions on this case two more times - which was considered extremely unpleasant, disturbing and unprecedented in its history - that exercising the right to education is a safeguard deriving from the Constitution and National Conventions signed by our Country, but also an essential measure - a key way to prepare prisoners for reintegration into society after serving their sentence.

The GNCHR focused as well on the landmark ECtHR judgement, in *Chowdury and others v. Greece* case (known as the "Manolada case") by submitting its Observations on the assessment of the level of compliance of the Greek State with the Recommendations delivered by the GNCHR to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe regarding the above mentioned judgement, Under Rule 9(2) of the Committee of Ministers Rules. By initially referring to all its previous Recommendations to the State, the GNCHR regretted that Greece had failed substantially to comply with the judgement, expressing its deep concern about the fact that the existing regulatory and institutional framework on combating trafficking in human beings or/and forced labour and on protecting the rights of victims, was not implemented in practice. More specifically, the GNCHR reiterated its relevant Recommendations one by one, while assessing the progress with regard to their implementation and reaffirmed the emblematic character of the ECtHR judgement in the "Manolada case" calling on the Committee of Ministers to monitor its execution as a matter of priority.

The GNCHR also concerned with the protection of our cultural heritage, issued a Statement on the conversion of the church of Hagia (Saint) Sophia into a mosque. More specifically, the GNCHR called on any competent person, to calmly and thoughtfully do the necessary, to safeguard the universality and the monumentality of Hagia Sophia, refraining from acts or omissions that fuel tension and undermine inter-religious and inter-cultural understanding.

The GNCHR also paid special attention to the entire destruction of the Moria reception and identification centre in Lesbos Island. The GNCHR issued a statement on the fire that devastated the hotspot in Moria, which endangered the lives of 12.767 persons, expressing its deep concern about the endangerment of

legal interests, of everyone living in the island of Lesbos, calling on the Greek State to immediately take all necessary steps to ensure decent accommodation for the thousands of asylum seekers, who had been stuck in Lesbos, to meet their basic needs and provide the appropriate health care services. Having repeatedly stressed that the practice of entrapment of applicants for international protection in the eastern Aegean islands would lead to an impasse and therefore had to be halted immediately, the GNCHR espoused the opinion of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, who underlined that Greece needs to be supported by the other European States, in a concrete and active way, while not only Greece, but also all European States must resolve the structural problems of an immigration policy that has caused so much unnecessary human suffering.

Protection of victims of torture is also included in the themes addressed by the GNCHR in 2020. The GNCHR published a Report *on the protection of asylum seekers, victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, in which after having mapped the main problems associated with the recognition of victims of torture, proceeded with specific Recommendations. Moreover, in order to address the issue more effectively and efficiently, the GNCHR organised a relevant hearing of national stakeholders and persons aiming at identifying loopholes and/or divergences in the national legislation in regard to the Country's alignment with the international conventions, at discussing the action taken so far by the bodies actively involved in the field and also presenting the needs and obstacles that arise in the implementation of the Recognition and rehabilitation of victims of torture, procedures.

Taking into account that the main mission of the GNCHR consists, among other things, of raising public awareness on human rights issues, the GNCHR published its Reference Report on the Refugee and Migrant Issue, which can be considered as one of the its most important Reports in 2020. Therein, the GNCHR brings together in a single text its Positions on the Refugee and Migrant Issue, by updating previous Positions and Recommendations on particular issues related to the protection of refugees (reception, detention, asylum, integration processes and so forth) and by adding as well, new chapters with references to the treatment of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and the protection of victims of torture, for example. The main ambition of the GNCHR has been to make a reference text and a useful guide to the State, the legislator, the Administration, those who apply law and governmental policies, experts and professionals in the field, research scientists and any other interested party.

Finally, special attention was attached to the GNCHR Statement on the Bill entitled: "Public open-air assemblies and other provisions", in which the GNCHR taking into consideration the criteria laid down by the ECtHR case-law, reiterated that reasons given by the Police and Port Authorities, as the responsible decision-making bodies, for justifying imposition of a ban on an assembly, must be "adequate and sufficient" while the issuance of their decisions must be based on an acceptable assessment of the relevant circumstances.

May 2021

A YEAR AT A GLANCE

GNCHR PEOPLE

Composition of the GNCHR seventh term (2019-2022)

Bureau

President

Maria Gavouneli, Appointed by the Greek League for Women's Rights, Professor of International Law, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.



First Vice – President

Giannis Ioannidis, Appointed by the Hellenic League for Human Rights. Attorney at law, Athens Bar Association



Second Vice – President

Elli Varhalama, Appointed by the Greek General Confederation of Labour (G.S.E.E), Attorney at law, Athens Bar Association



Sections

In accordance with the GNCHR Regulation, five Sections active in different fields, have been established. Where matters which, by their nature, fall within the field of more than one Section, those Sections shall cooperate.

These five Sections are as follows:

- The 1st Section for Civic and Political Rights

Chair: *Giannis Ioannidis*

- The 2nd Section for Social, Economic and Cultural Rights

Chair: *Elli Varchalama*

- The 3rd Section for the Application of Human Rights to Aliens

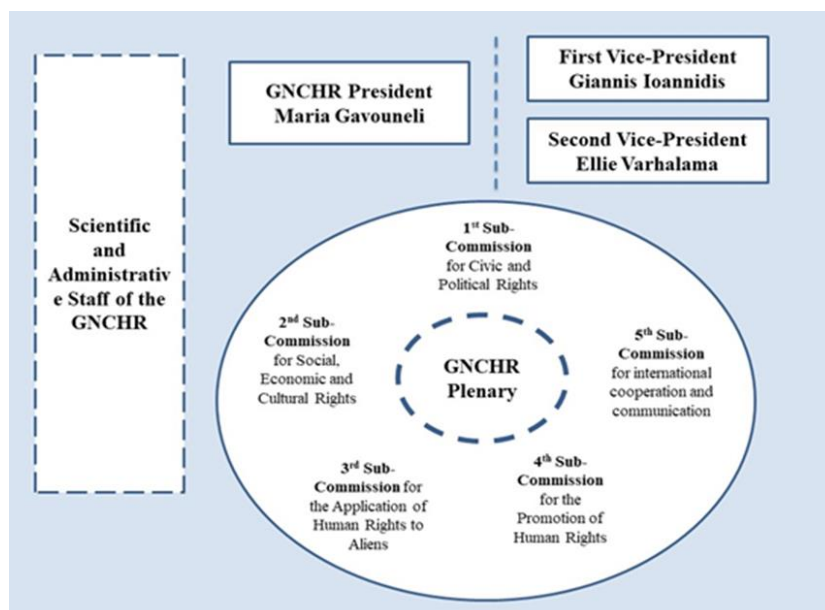
Chair: *Spyridon Apergis*

- The 4th Section for the Promotion of Human Rights

Chair: *Maria-Iliana Pravita*

- The 5th Section for International Communication and Co-operation

Chair: *Maria Gavouneli*

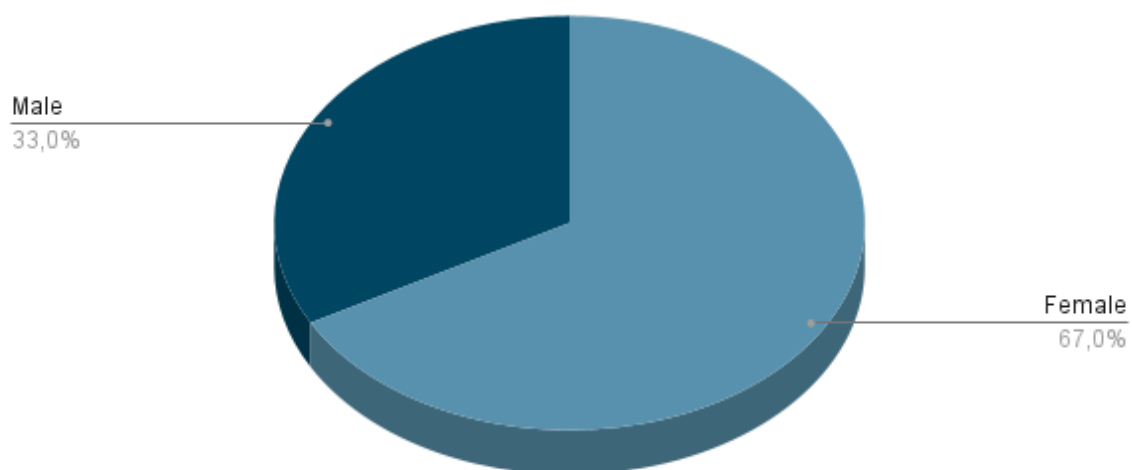


Female Representation



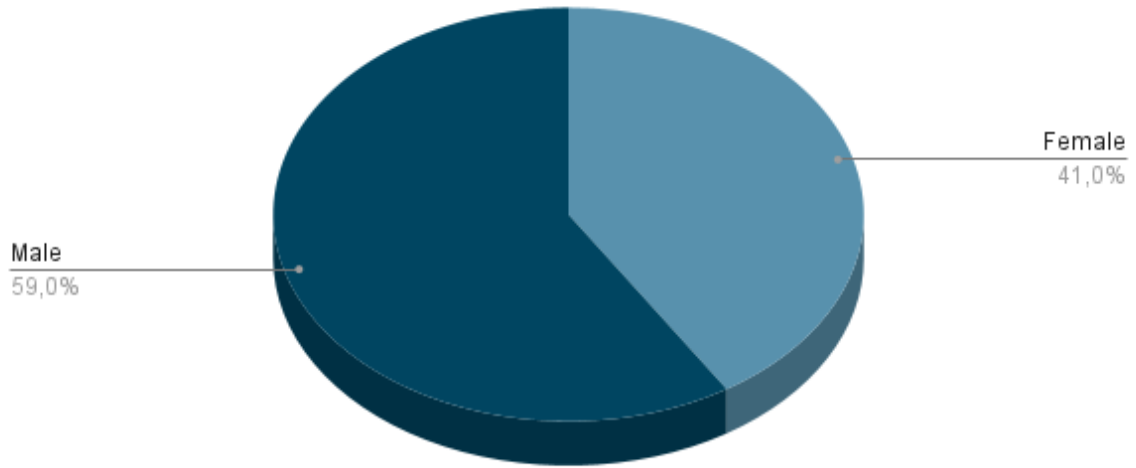
Bureau

GNCHR Bureau



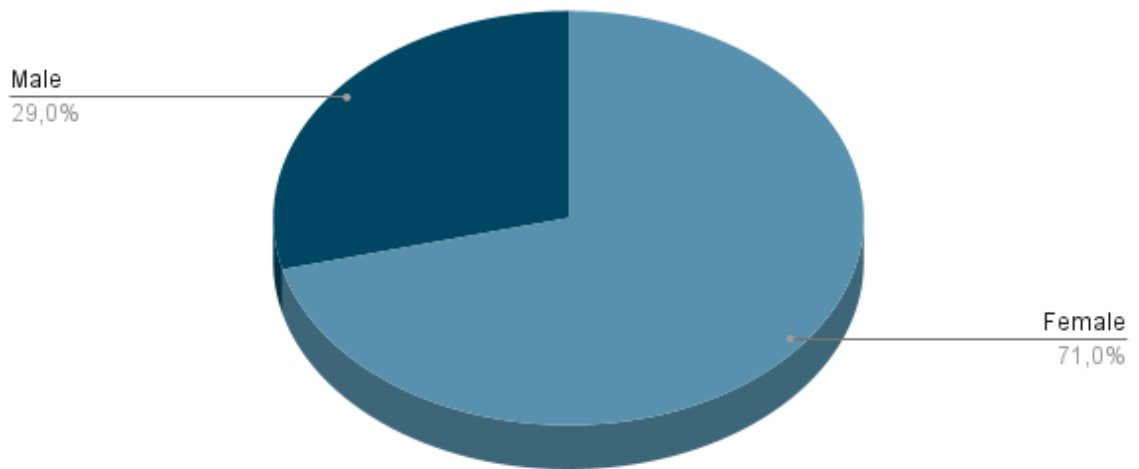
Members

GNCHR Members



Staff

GNCHR Staff



Plenary Composition

According to Article 2 of law 2667/1998, the GNCHR is composed of 43 members appointed by an equal number of institutions for a three-year term of office. Its pluralistic composition facilitates the creative coexistence of persons coming from different backgrounds with diverse views, knowledge and experience about human rights issues, expressing independently their opinions: academics, trade unionists, representatives of civil society or persons appointed by independent authorities, as well as persons appointed by the Public Administration or political parties. In the context of the functioning of the GNCHR, the exchange of views is based on respect for differing opinions and a spirit of cooperation, seeking each time the broadest possible consensus, so far achieved in most cases.

As of 2020, the GNCHR was composed of the following members:

Members with voting rights:

- **Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE):** Elli Varchalama (alternate member: Despina Babanelou)
- **Supreme Administration of Civil Servants' Unions of Greece (ADEDY):** Stathis Gotsis (alternate member: Aikaterini Giannoulia)
- **Greek National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities (ESAmEA):** Ioannis Vardakastanis (alternate member: Ioannis Lymvaivos)
- **Amnesty International - Greek Section:** Foivos Iatrellis (alternate member: Spyros Apergis)
- **Hellenic League for Human Rights (ELEDA):** Giannis Ioannidis (alternate member: Aikaterini Pournara)
- **Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights (MFHR):** Christoforos Argyropoulos (alternate member: Maria - Andriani Kostopoulou)
- **Greek Council for Refugees (GCR):** Alexandros Konstantinou (alternate member: Spyros Koulocheris)
- **Greek League for Women's Rights:** Maria Gavouneli (alternate member: Maria - Iliana Pravita)
- **Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma (POSER):** Eleftherios Dimitriou (alternate member: Vasileios Dimitriou)
- **Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma (ELLAN PASSE):** Vasilios Pantzos (alternate member: Ilias Giannopoulos)
- **Greek Transgender Support Association (SYD):** Marina-Matha Galanou (alternate member: Vasilis Sotiropoulos)
- **Athens Pride:** Giannis Papagiannopoulos (alternate member: Andrea Gilbert)

- **Lesbian & Gay Community of Greece (OLKE):** Eirini Petropoulou (alternate member: Aristotelis Raptis)
- **Colour Youth - Athens LGBTQ Youth Community:** Ariadni Petraki (alternate member: Anna Papazoglou)
- **Rainbow Families Greece:** Aikaterini Trimmi (alternate member: Aikaterini Georgountzou)**Hellenic Roma Action (HEROMACT):** Eleftherios Konstantinidis (alternate member: Manolis Rantis)
- **Political Parties recognised according to the Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament:** Nea Dimokratia (ND) (New Democracy) – May Zanni (alternate member: Maria Diamanti), Kinima Allagis (KINAL) (Movement for Change) – Xenofon Kontiadis (alternate member: Vasilis Chronopoulos), Kommounistiko Komma Elladas (KKE) (Communist Party of Greece) – Antonis Antanasiotis, Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras (SYRIZA) (Coalition of the Radical Left) – Danai Koltsida (alternate member: Ioannis Gounaris), Metopo Evropaikis Rizospastikis Anypakois (MERA 25) (European Realistic Disobedience Front) – Vasilis Pantazis (alternate member: Maria Korizi)
- **Hellenic Consumer’s Ombudsman:** Lefteris Zagoritis (alternate member: Athina Kontogianni)
- **The Greek Ombudsman:** Andreas Pottakis (alternate member Georgios Nikolopoulos)
- **Hellenic Data Protection Authority:** Charalampos Anthopoulos (alternate member: Eleni Martsoukou)
- **Greek National Council for Radio and Television (EPT):** Evangelia (Lilian) Mitrou (alternate member: Nikolaos Kiaos)
- **Greek National Commission for Bioethics and Technoethics:** Charalampos Savvakis (alternate member: Nikolaos Anagnou)
- Persons of high standing, recognised competence, and expertise in human rights protection issues, appointed by the Prime Minister: Kyrkos Doxiadis and Athina Athanasiou
- **Professors or Associate Professors of Public Law or Public International Law:** Theodora Antoniou, School of Law, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (alternate member: Pavlos-Mihail Efstratiou), Ifigeneia Kamtsidou, Law School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (alternate member: Lina Papadopoulou), Stefanos Dimitriou, Department of Political Science and History Panteion University (alternate member: Stamatoula Tomara-Sideri)
- **Athens Bar Association:** Christos Kleiosis (alternate member: Panagiotis Chasiotis)

Non-Voting Members:

- **Special Permanent Committee on Institutions and Transparency (Parliamentary Committees) :** Chairman, Athanasios Bouras

- **Hellenic Ministry of Interior:** Christos Saritzoglou (alternate member: Errika-Evrikleia Pradan)
- **Hellenic Ministry of Citizen Protection:** Dimitris Kalogrias (alternate member: Sophia Doukiatzaki)
- **Hellenic Ministry of Migration and Asylum:** Konstantinos Kintis (alternate member: Spyros Spyropoulos)
- **Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** Iraklis Moskof (alternate member: Ilias Kastanas)
- **Hellenic Ministry of Justice:** Theofilos Tsagris (alternate member: Katerina Polyzou)
- **Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs:** Katerina Mpompetsi (alternate member: Manolis Sarlamis)
- **Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs:** Souzanna Laskaridou (alternate member: Evangelia Zerva)
- **General Secretariat for Media & Communication:** Maria Sfetsa (alternate member: Eleni Grigoriou)

Staff

Specialised Scientific Staff

- *Dr Roxani Fragkou*

Legal Coordinator/Human Rights Officer at the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR). She completed her PhD studies in Public Law at the University of Strasbourg and she also holds a Master Degree in Public Law (DEA en Droit public, Université Robert Schuman-Strasbourg III). Lecturer at the Hellenic Open University (EAP), and the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) [on maternity leave in 2020]



- *Antonis Veneris*

Legal/Research Officer, PhD studies in “Law and Informatics” at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Specialised Expert in Personal Data Protection



- *Anna Irene Baka*

Legal/Research Officer, PhD in Public International Law and Legal Philosophy of (University of Hong Kong), LLM in International, Comparative and EU Law (Institute for European Studies, Free University of Brussels), MA in Public Law and European Integration (Panteion University of Athens), LLB (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), Lawyer [she was on care-child leave during 2021]



- *Eva Tzavala*

Legal/Research Officer, PhD Candidate at the Athens Law School, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), Research Scientist in Athens Public International Law Centre, Expert in Public International Law, Human Rights Law and Refugee Law First degree in Law (EKPA) and LLM in International Law and International Organisations (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne).



- *Katerina Charokopou*

Legal/Research Officer, PhD in Public International Law (Faculty of Law, University of Vienna), LLB (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) (employee on secondment since 16.1.2019 pursuant to the provisions of Law 4440/2016 (Government Gazette A'/224))



Administrative Staff

- *Katerina Pantou*

Head of the GNCHR Secretariat, Administrative Service Staff, MA in European Political Studies (Bath University, UK), Degree in Political Science and Public Administration (University of Athens)



- *Dionysis Giakoumelos:*

University Education employee, providing secretarial and technical support MA in European Studies (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium), Graduate of the Greek National School of Public Administration, Degree in Communication and Mass Media (Panteion University of Athens) (employee on secondment since 16.1.2019 pursuant to the provisions of Law 4440/2016 (Government Gazette A'/224))



Interns

In 2020, the GNCHR was assisted by three (3) interns:

- students of Law and Political Sciences: Konstantinos Kyriakopoulos (December 2019 - March 2020), Dimitris Pavlidis (January - April 2020) and Vasilis Gerapetritis (September-December 2020)

**GNCHR; THE INDEPENDENT ADVISORY BODY TO THE STATE ON
MATTERS PERTAINING TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AND PROMOTION
AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND
PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (NHRI) IN GREECE**

GNCHR: the independent advisory body to the State

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) was established by Law 2667/1998 Article 1, (1) as the independent advisory body to the Greek State in accordance with the *UN Paris Principles* adopted by the United Nations (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/134, 20.12.1993 “National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights”) and is the National Institution for the protection and promotion of Human Rights (NHRI) in Greece.



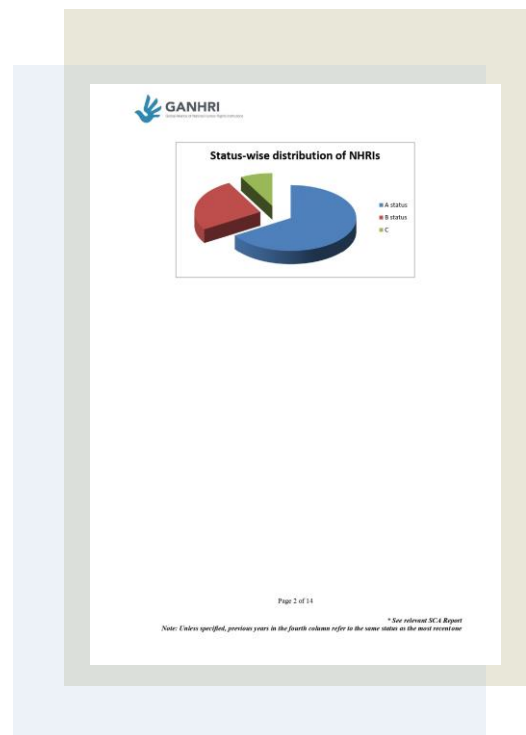
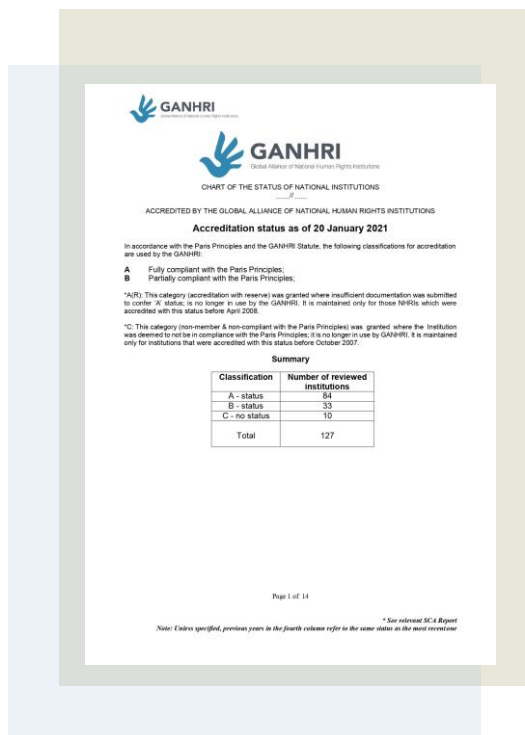
GNCHR; the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are periodically accredited before the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI). They are assessed on the basis of the UN Paris Principles, which are the international standards for NHRIs to promote and protect

human rights effectively and independently. NHRIs that are assessed as fully complying with the Paris Principles are accredited with 'A status', while those partially complying are accredited with 'B status'. 'A status' NHRIs can participate in a number of UN mechanisms as follows:

- UN Human Rights Council; the monitoring bodies of the international conventions for the protection of human rights (Treaty Bodies), Special Procedures (special rapporteurs and independent experts), the Universal Periodic Review mechanism (UPR) of the Council of Europe.
- In addition 'A status' NHRIs cooperate with the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI),
- the European Union, the European Commission and the Fundamental Rights Agency, thus co-shaping the international landscape of human rights and promoting their protection in every country.

Similar A status National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (NHRIs), already operate in most EU Member States, while the remaining Member States are in the process of either harmonising existing institutions with the Paris Principles or establishing new NHRIs, that comply with the relevant requirements. Currently, 84 countries around the world have fully harmonised NHRIs and a number of others have launched the establishment of their own National Institutions (see GANHRI [Chart of the status of National Institutions](#)).



In Greece, the institutional role of the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) has been assigned to the GNCHR. The GNCHR is periodically subject to regular and demanding accreditation procedures by the competent international GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), which operates under the auspices of and in cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The GNCHR is a fully harmonised (A Status) NHRI since 2001, when only a very small number of 12 NHRIs were recognised as fully compliant with the Paris Principles. In March 2017, the GNCHR was re-accredited A status by the SCA, demonstrating in practical terms the fulfilment of its mission to promote and protect human rights, at a time when the country is emerging from a deep economic, social and humanitarian crisis, which is reflected in the Country's international image.

GNCHR; the key idea behind its establishment

The establishment of the GNCHR emanated from the need to constantly monitor developments relating to the status of human rights in the country and abroad, to ensure Greek public awareness of human rights-related issues and, above all, to provide guidelines to the Greek State aiming at a sound central policy-making on human rights issues. The GNCHR aims to constantly pointing out to all State

institutions the need to effectively safeguard the human rights of all those living in the Greek territory.

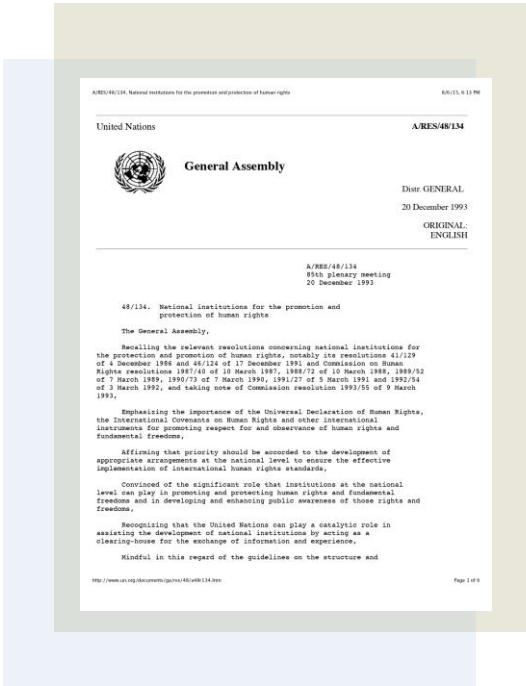
GNCHR; its main mission

According to its law, the main mission of GNCHR consists of:

- a) constantly monitoring matters pertaining to human rights protection, raising public awareness and promoting research in this field,
- exchanging experience at supra-national and international level with similar bodies of other States, the European Union or international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the United Nations, and
- formulating policy proposals on matters falling within its remit.

GNCHR; Independence and Pluralism

The independence of the GNCHR, *conditio sine qua non*, for the fulfilment of its dual mandate to promote and protect human rights, entrusted to it by the legislator, is enshrined in its law and guaranteed, *inter alia*, on the basis of a mandate that is as broad as possible and clearly defined in the legislation. (Paris Principles A.2)



The legislation related to the functioning of the GNCHR clearly defines its mission and scope, while its mandate is interpreted in a broad and constructive manner, in order to promote a more progressive definition of human rights that includes all human rights, as these are defined in international, regional and national texts and interpreted by the competent international judicial and quasi-judicial bodies. In this way the fundamental principle of human rights law, according to which all rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent, is put into practice.

An additional guarantee of the GNCHR independence is its pluralistic and polyphonic composition with the participation of 41 bodies, which allows and fosters a unique dialogue between various Civil Society actors and the State. Reflecting the pluralism of views on human rights-related issues, this collective composition, which includes, *inter alia*, independent authorities, universities of law and political science, trade unions, NGOs, political parties and ministries, ensures a very high level of expertise, well-matched to the needs and challenges present in the field.

In the context of its institutional role and its mission as a guardian of human rights at international, regional and national level, the GNCHR has been assigned the responsibility of bridging the gap, not only between the State and Civil Society, but also between the Country's international commitments to the implementation of human rights and their real enjoyment in practice.

Persons designated by the GNCHR to participate in collective State administration bodies

In the context of its institutional role as the State's independent advisory body on matters pertaining to the protection of human rights, the GNCHR is mandated to advise all public authorities on human rights related issues and provide them with any possible assistance in their work on promoting and protecting these rights. Designating participants in collective bodies of Public Administration, is one of the many different ways, for the GNCHR to fulfil its mandate. In 2020, the GNCHR responded willingly and with responsibility to the following requests for:

Membership in the National Council against Racism and Intolerance (ESRM)

In accordance with the provisions of law 4356/2015, Government Gazette A 181, 24.12.2015 (Articles 15 et seq.), the GNCHR, is a member of the Greek National Council Against Racism and Intolerance (ESRM), to be represented in its meetings by a person of its choice. During 2020, the GNCHR was represented by Marina-Matha Galanou (full member) and Aikaterini Pournara (alternate member).

Designation of Members to participate in the Naturalisation Committees

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 12 of the Greek Nationality (or Citizenship) Code, which was ratified by [Law 3284/2004](#), as replaced by Article 8 of Law [3838/2010](#), (Government Gazette A 49), further replaced by Article 26 (2) of Law [3938/2011](#) (Government Gazette A 61) and amended by Article 142 (6) of Law [4251/2014](#) (Government Gazette A 80), Article 59 of Law [4456/2017](#) (Government Gazette A 24) and Article 38 of Law [4604/2019](#) (Government Gazette A 50), Naturalisation Committees are established, to deliver an opinion on the contribution to the substantive requirements that must be fulfilled by foreign nationals, wishing to acquire Greek nationality (Law 3838/2010, Article 3). In accordance with the GNCHR Regulation, one of its members along with their alternate, shall be designated in each of the Naturalisation Committees. Pursuant to the law provisions, the Naturalisation Committees shall be established throughout the country at the headquarters of the competent Regional Directorate of Citizenship and consist of:

- a. the Head of the competent Regional Directorate of Citizenship, as President,
- b. the Head of the Department of Citizenship or Naturalisation of the competent Regional Directorate of Citizenship, as a member,

c. a member of the Teaching and Research Staff or the Laboratory Teaching Staff or a scientist recruited under the provisions of the Presidential Decree 407/1980 at a Higher Educational Institution, having its seat in or near the relevant Regional Directorate of Citizenship in the fields of linguistics, education, history, sociology, sociology, political science, literature or related social sciences or humanities, designated, along with its alternates, by the competent administrative body of the relevant Higher Educational Institution.

d. an official of one of the relevant Directorates of Secondary Education, appointed with his/her alternate by the competent Regional Director(s) of Education, as a member,

e. a member of the GNCHR appointed with his/her alternate, according to its Regulation

The Naturalisation Committees, shall be established by decision of the Special Sectoral Secretary of Citizenship and operate at the headquarters of the competent Regional Directorate of Citizenship. Additionally, the above mentioned decision includes the appointment of the President and the members of the Committee, through the same procedure, as well as of the Secretary of the Committee, an employee of the competent Regional Directorate of Citizenship along with his/her alternate.

Pursuant to the provisions of Articles 6 and 280 of Law 3852/2010 "New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralised Administration – Kallikratis Programme" (Government Gazette A 87,7.6.2010) and the provisions of Law 3938/2011, the GNCHR shall appoint, whenever requested to do so, members - both full and alternate - to all Naturalisation Committees of all the Decentralised Administrative Units of the Greek State as follows: a) in Thessaly and Central Greece where 2 Naturalisation Committees are established b) in Epirus and Western Macedonia c) Peloponnesus, Western Greece and the Ionian Islands where 2 Naturalisation Committees are established d) in Crete e) in Attica where 4 Naturalisation Committees competent at local level are established f) in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace where 3 Naturalisation Committees competent at local level are established g) in the Aegean Islands, where 2 Naturalisation Committees competent at local level are established. In 2020, the GNCHR designated new members to certain Naturalisation Committees, whose two-year term was about to expire.

The above mentioned Naturalisation procedure was amended by the provisions of Article 6 of Law 4735/2020 "Amendment of the Greek Nationality code, new framework for public sector Administrations selection, regulations concerning organisational issues of the General Secretariat of Citizenship and the General Secretariat of Human Resources in the Public Sector of the Ministry of Interior, regulations concerning the development perspective and the proper functioning of Local Government Agencies" (Government Gazette A 197,12.10.2020) Pursuant to these provisions, the Naturalisation Committees were replaced by Special Three-Member Examination Committees, composed of an employee of the General Secretariat

of Citizenship as Chair and two public or private education teachers, appointed with an equal number of alternates thus excluding from their composition, persons designated by the GNCHR.

Designation of Members to participate in the Committees on Migration

According to Article 134 of Law 4251/2014, as replaced by Article 31(17) of Law 4540/2018, three Committees on Migration shall be established in the Hellenic Ministry of Migration Policy in order to issue opinions on granting residence permits to third country nationals, considering their special ties with the social life of the Country. Opinions should also be issued by the Committees, in all cases where an application is referred to them relating to the granting or renewal of a residence permit issued by the Ministry of Immigration Policy. The Committees shall be established by a decision of the Minister of Immigration Policy, appointing the Chair, members and secretaries, both full and alternate members. The Committees shall be composed of: a) Two (2) employees of the Ministry of Immigration Policy, one (1) of whom as Chair b) one (1) employee of the Ministry of Interior c) one (1) representative of Civil Society, as proposed by the National Commission for Human Rights d) one (1) representative of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece.

The GNCHR shall, in accordance with its institutional obligations, appoint representatives of civil society whenever it is requested to do so.

Participation in the Social Dialogue Committee of the Public Health Organisation

Since 2017, the GNCHR has been participating in the Social Dialogue Committee of the National Public Health Organisation. Charalampos Savvakis and Nikolaos Anagnostou, are designated by the GNCR to participate in the Social Dialogue Committee as full and alternate members correspondingly.

Participation in the Panhellenic Committee for the return of the Parthenon Marbles

In 31 January 2020, by a letter sent to the President of the Plenary of Presidents of Greek Bar Associations and President of Athens Bar Association, Dimitris Vervesos, the GNCHR designated its member, historian of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, Stathis Gkotsis, to be its representative in the Panhellenic Committee for the return of the Parthenon Marbles. The Panhellenic Committee for the return of the Parthenon Marbles is established by decision of the Plenary of Presidents of Greek Bar Associations.

GNCHR; similar NHRIs and international action

The work and contribution of the GNCHR in promoting and protecting human rights in Greece were once again recognised at international level, as confirmed by its re-election in October 2018, for a second consecutive term (2019-2022) as a member

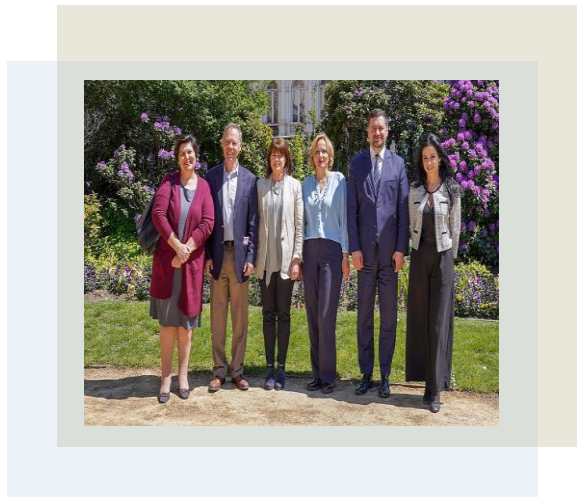
of the European Coordinating Committee (ECC) which is the executive body of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI).

In addition, during the same ENNHRI General Assembly, which took place on 24 October 2018 in Athens, the GNCHR was elected as a member of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

The GNCHR is represented in the internal administration bodies of the NHRIs European and global networks, by its President Maria Gavouneli. Moreover, the GNCHR is actively participating in meetings and events organised by the GANHRI and the ENNHRI, as well as in the Working Groups operating therein.

GNCHR and the UN Paris Principles translation

The UN Paris Principles, drafted at an international NHRIs workshop in Paris in 1991, and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/134 20.12.1993, "National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights") constitute a set of international standards which frame and guide the work of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). The Paris Principles promote the establishment and strengthening of the NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles, indicating the way to carry out their work as much effectively as possible. In other words, they constitute a set of the minimum standards that NHRIs must meet in order to be considered legitimate, credible and effectively operating.



Although, these "soft law" rules lack binding legal force, the international interest they have aroused among the UN as well as other international and regional organisations, including the Council of Europe, has been so considerable and the response on their part to them so positive, that they are now considered to be the "minimum standards for the effective operation of an NHRI". This is why the UN

monitoring bodies, in their recommendations and declarations, tend to constantly emphasise the importance of the Paris Principles, thereby recognising the need to ensure their implementation and at the same time setting the process of the NHRIs accreditation, in accordance with the Paris Principles, under the auspices of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As part of its institutional role as an NHRI, the GNCHR sets out in Greek the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (UN Paris Principles, in English):

United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/48/134, 4 March 1994 (The Paris Principles)

**National institutions for the promotion and protection
of human rights**

Competence and responsibilities

1. A national institution shall be vested with competence to promote and protect human rights.

2. A national institution shall be given as broad a mandate as possible, which shall be clearly set forth in a constitutional or legislative text, specifying its composition and its sphere of competence.

3. A national institution shall, inter alia, have the following responsibilities:

(a) To submit to the Government, Parliament and any other competent body, on an advisory basis either at the request of the authorities concerned or through the exercise of its power to hear a matter without higher referral, opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports on any matters concerning the promotion and protection of human rights; the national institution may decide to publicize them; these opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports, as well as any prerogative of the national institution, shall relate to the following areas:

(i) Any legislative or administrative provisions, as well as provisions relating to judicial organizations, intended to preserve and extend the protection of human rights; in that connection, the national institution shall examine the legislation and administrative provisions in force, as well as bills and proposals, and shall make such recommendations as it deems appropriate in order to ensure that these provisions conform to the fundamental principles of human rights; it shall, if necessary, recommend the adoption of new legislation, the amendment of legislation in force and the adoption or amendment of administrative measures;

(ii) any situation of violation of human rights which it decides to take up;

(iii) The preparation of reports on the national situation with regard to human rights in

general, and on more specific matters;

(iv) Drawing the attention of the Government to situations in any part of the country where human rights are violated and making proposals to it for initiatives to put an end to such situations and, where necessary, expressing an opinion on the positions and reactions of the Government;

(b) To promote and ensure the harmonization of national legislation, regulations and practices with the international human rights instruments to which the State is a party, and their effective implementation;

(c) To encourage ratification of the above-mentioned instruments or accession to those instruments, and to ensure their implementation;

(d) To contribute to the reports which States are required to submit to United Nations bodies and committees, and to regional institutions, pursuant to their treaty obligations and, where necessary, to express an opinion on the subject, with due respect for their independence;

(e) To cooperate with the United Nations and any other organization in the United Nations system, the regional institutions and the national institutions of other countries that are competent in the areas of the promotion and protection of human rights;

(f) To assist in the formulation of programmes for the teaching of, and research into, human rights and to take part in their execution in schools, universities and professional circles;

(g) To publicize human rights and efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, in particular racial discrimination, by increasing public awareness, especially through information and education and by making use of all press organs.

Composition and guarantees of independence and pluralism

1. The composition of the national institution and the appointment of its members, whether by means of an election or otherwise, shall be established in accordance with a procedure which affords all necessary guarantees to ensure the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society) involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly by powers which will enable effective cooperation to be established with, or through the presence of, representatives of:

(a) Non-governmental organizations responsible for human rights and efforts to combat racial discrimination, trade unions, concerned social and professional organizations, for example, associations of lawyers, doctors, journalists and eminent scientists;

(b) Trends in philosophical or religious thought;

(c) Universities and qualified experts;

(d) Parliament;

(e) Government departments (if these are included, their representatives should participate in the deliberations only in an advisory capacity).

2. The national institution shall have an infrastructure which is suited to the smooth conduct of its activities, in particular adequate funding. The purpose of this funding should be to enable it to have its own staff and premises, in order to be independent of the Government and not be subject to financial control which might affect its independence.

3. In order to ensure a stable mandate for the members of the national institution, without

which there can be no real independence, their appointment shall be effected by an official act which shall establish the specific duration of the mandate. This mandate may be renewable, provided that the pluralism of the institution's membership is ensured.

Methods of operation

Within the framework of its operation, the national institution shall:

- (a) Freely consider any questions falling within its competence, whether they are submitted by the Government or taken up by it without referral to a higher authority, on the proposal of its members or of any petitioner;
- (b) Hear any person and obtain any information and any documents necessary for assessing situations falling within its competence;
- (c) Address public opinion directly or through any press organ, particularly in order to publicize its opinions and recommendations;
- (d) Meet on a regular basis and whenever necessary in the presence of all its members after they have been duly convened;
- (e) Establish working groups from among its members as necessary, and set up local or regional sections to assist it in discharging its functions;
- (f) Maintain consultation with the other bodies, whether jurisdictional or otherwise, responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights (in particular ombudsmen, mediators and similar institutions);
- (g) In view of the fundamental role played by the non-governmental organizations in expanding the work of the national institutions, develop relations with the non-governmental organizations devoted to promoting and protecting human rights, to economic and social development, to combating racism, to protecting particularly vulnerable groups (especially children, migrant workers, refugees, physically and mentally disabled persons) or to specialized areas.

Additional principles concerning the status of commissions with quasi-judicial competence

A national institution may be authorized to hear and consider complaints and petitions concerning individual situations. Cases may be brought before it by individuals, their representatives, third parties, non-governmental organizations, associations of trade unions or any other representative organizations. In such circumstances, and without prejudice to the principles stated above concerning the other powers of the commissions, the functions entrusted to them may be based on the following principles:

- (a) Seeking an amicable settlement through conciliation or, within the limits prescribed by the law, through binding decisions or, where necessary, on the basis of confidentiality;
- (b) Informing the party who filed the petition of his rights, in particular the remedies available to him, and promoting his access to them;
- (c) Hearing any complaints or petitions or transmitting them to any other competent authority within the limits prescribed by the law;

(d) Making recommendations to the competent authorities, especially by proposing amendments or reforms of the laws, regulations and administrative practices, especially if they have created the difficulties encountered by the persons filing the petitions in order to assert their rights.

PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Main thematic priorities of the GNCHR in 2020

Encouragement of dialogue and promotion of interaction and cooperation between the NHRIs and public authorities responsible for the implementation of human rights, are essential prerequisites for fostering a culture of human rights respect. The GNCHR plays a significant and constructive role in the effective implementation of human rights' protection, by constantly monitoring the developments related to the status and implementation of human rights in Greece and moreover, by providing continuous advisory support to the competent bodies of the State.

The advisory role constitutes a key responsibility of the NHRIs and, according to the minimum standards set by the Paris Principles, not only does it entail the submission of opinions, recommendations, proposals or reports on their part and their participation in Parliamentary meetings, but also includes their contribution to the reports submitted by the national competent authorities on their compliance with international, regional and/or European human rights standards (*reporting*) as well the encouragement for the ratification of international human rights treaties.

At the same time, the GNCHR is entrusted with and carries out responsibly and effectively, the general task of *monitoring* the compliance of the competent State Authorities with international, regional and/or national human rights standards pursuant to the Paris Principles (1) (3b).

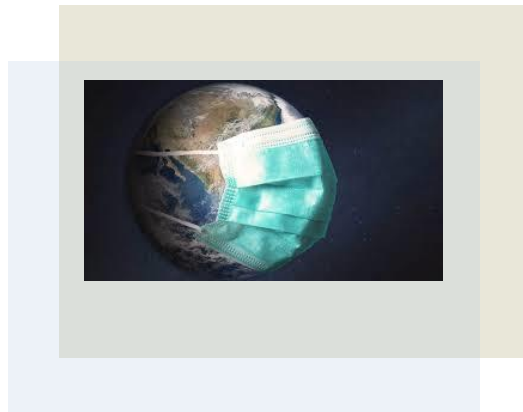
More specifically, it should be noted that the GNCHR held online plenary meetings on a weekly basis during the first mandatory lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, with the participation of state and non-state agencies, involved in the decision-making process, in order to deal with the new challenges in the most efficient way possible, assess the impact of the restrictive policy measures on human rights and democratic values, provide the Greek government with appropriate advice on the protection of the core human rights as well as to raise public awareness of human rights issues and risks deriving from their violation due to the pandemic. It should also be noted, that the GNCHR is constantly monitoring all other human rights related issues (refugees, environment, etc.) regarding the development of a sound central policy on them.

More specifically, in 2020, the GNCHR expressed an especially deep interest in the following thematic areas:

Human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic

Report on the need for protection of human rights with regard to the measures taken in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and recommendations to the State References to issues discussed in the GNCHR meetings, during the period of the restrictive measures imposed to ensure an efficient response to pandemic spreads. GNCHR Meetings held on 8,2,29 April and 6 May 2020 (June 2020)

<https://nchr.gr/en/news/1136-report-on-the-need-for-protection-of-human-rights-with-regard-to-the-measures-taken-in-response-to-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-and-recommendations-to-the-state.html>



GNCHR Statement on the Bill entitled: “Public open-air assemblies and other Provisions” (July 2020)

<https://nchr.gr/2020-02-26-05-51-20/45-ergasia/1039-CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%B5%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%BF-%CF%83%CF%87%CE%AD%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BF-%CE%BD%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CF%8C%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B5%CF%82-%CF%85%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%AF%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%B5%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%AF%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%82-%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%AC%CE%BE%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82.html>

GNCHR Statement on the ban of Public open-air assemblies (November 2020)

<https://nchr.gr/2020-02-26-05-51-20/100-%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B1->

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Refugees-migrants

GNCHR Press Release “In the island of Samos the system has collapsed” (January 2020)

https://nchr.gr/images/pdf/nea_epikairothta/deltia_tupou/DT_Monitoring%20Visit_Samos.pdf



Letter addressed to the Minister for Migration and Asylum, Notis Mitarakis, on the urgent case of a Syrian family with 5 minor children at risk of deportation (February 2020)

GNCHR Statement on the Review of asylum and immigration policy initiatives and safeguarding human rights at EU borders<https://nchr.gr/ta-nea-mas/1013-%CE%B4%CE%AE%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B7-%CE%B5%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B1-%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B5%CE%BE%CE%AD%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CF%89%CE%BD-%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD-%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%AC%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%86%CF%8D%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BE%CE%B7-%CF%84%CF%89%CE%BD-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B8%CF%81%CF%89%CF%80%CE%AF%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD-%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9%CF%89%CE%BC%CE%AC%CF%84%CF%89%CE%BD-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%8D%CE%BD%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%B5%CE%B5.html>

Statement Review of asylum and immigration policy initiatives and safeguarding human rights at EU borders

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Submission of observations on the Bill of Ministry for Migration and Asylum, entitled: "Improvement of legislation on migration, amendment of Laws 4636/2019 (A '169), 4375/2016 (A' 51), 4251/2014 (A '80) and other provisions" (April 2020)

GNCHR statement on the: Cessation of social care for beneficiaries of international protection.

Immediate risk of homelessness for thousands of recognised refugees (June 2020)

https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/prosfuges_metanastes/Dilosi%20EEDA_Pausi%20koinonikis%20frontidas%20stous%20dikaiouxous%20diethnous%20prostasias.pdf



GNCHR Statement on reported refoulement practices (July 2020)

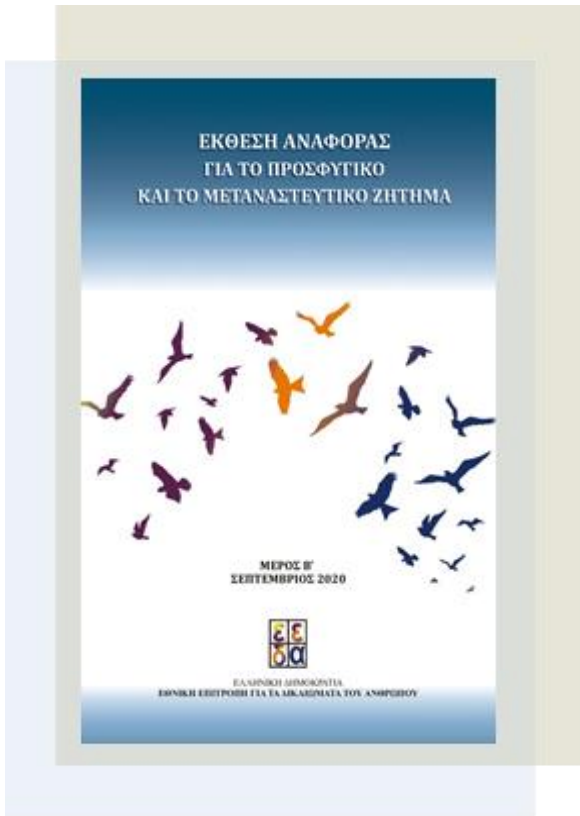
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GNCHR Report on the refugee and migration issues. Part B (September 2020)

<https://nchr.gr/ta-nea-mas/1130-%CE%AD%CE%BA%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B7-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%B5%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B1->

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GNCHR Statement on the fire that devastated the hotspot in Moria. Coping with the aftermath (2020)

https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/nea_epikairothta/deltia_tupou/Dilosi%20EEDA%20gia%20ti%20Moria1.pdf



Establishment of a Working Group on the recording mechanism for complaints of refoulement (November 2020)

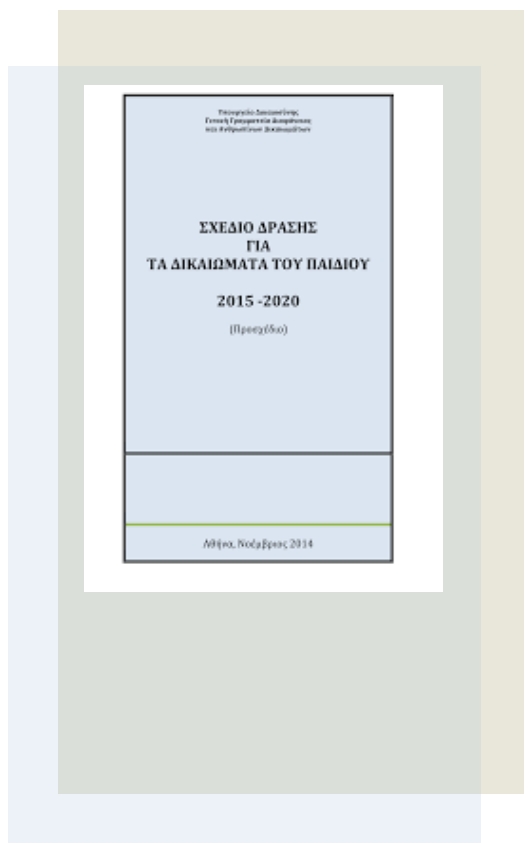
Protection of childhood

GNCHR Report entitled, “Information relevant to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child” (January 2020)

https://nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/paidia/GNCHR_Submission_to_UNCRC.pdf



Letter addressed to the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, Panos Alexandris, entitled, “Greek National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child” (October 2020)



Persons with disabilities

Letter addressed to the Minister of State of Greece, Yorgos Gerapetritis, on the co-ordination mechanism provided by Law 4488/2017 regarding the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (November 2020)

Prevention of torture

GNCHR Report on the protection of asylum seekers, victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (September 2020)

https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/vasanisthria/EEDA_Ekthesi_Vasanistiria.pdf



Citizenship

Letter addressed to the Minister of Interior, Panayotis Theodorikakos, on the Bill of the Ministry of Interior, entitled, "Amendment of the Greek Nationality (or Citizenship) Code, new framework for the selection of executives in Public Administration, regulations concerning organisational issues of the General Secretariat of Citizenship and the General Secretariat of Human Resources in the Public Sector of the Ministry of Interior, regulations concerning the development perspective and the proper functioning of Local Government Agencies" (October 2020)



Women

GNCHR Contribution to the 2019-2024 Greek National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1325/2000 on Women, Peace and Security (March 2020) <https://www.nchr.gr/ta-nea-mas/1692-2019-2024.html>



Information relevant to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW (November 2020)
https://www.nchr.gr/images/English_Site/GYNAIKES/GNCHR_Information_on_CEDAW.pdf

Tackling Racism and Intolerance

Contribution to the Greek National Action Plan against racism (January 2020)

https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/diakriseis/Symvoli_ESD_kata_Ratsismou_jan_2020.pdf

Membership in the National Council against Racism and Intolerance (ESRM)

Monitoring of the Racist Violence Recording Network



Labour trafficking

Recommendations with regard to the immediate full compliance of the Greek Government with the landmark ECtHR judgment, Chowdury and Others v. Greece (known as the "Manolada case")

https://www.nchr.gr/images/English_Site/TRAFFICKING/GNCHR%20Recommendations%20on%20the%20Manolada%20case.pdf Communication on the assessment of the level of compliance of the Greek State with GNCHR's recommendations on ECtHR judgment. Communication under Rule 9(2) on the execution of the judgment in Chowdury v. Greece (21884/15) to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (June 2020)
https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/emporia_anthrwpon/GNCHR-Communication_on_the_level_of_compliance_of_Greece_with_Manolada_judgement.pdf



Police brutality

Statement triggered by the recent complaints concerning unjustifiable use of force by the Hellenic Police and policy proposals by the Minister of Citizen Protection, concerning the use of surveillance cameras (January 2020)

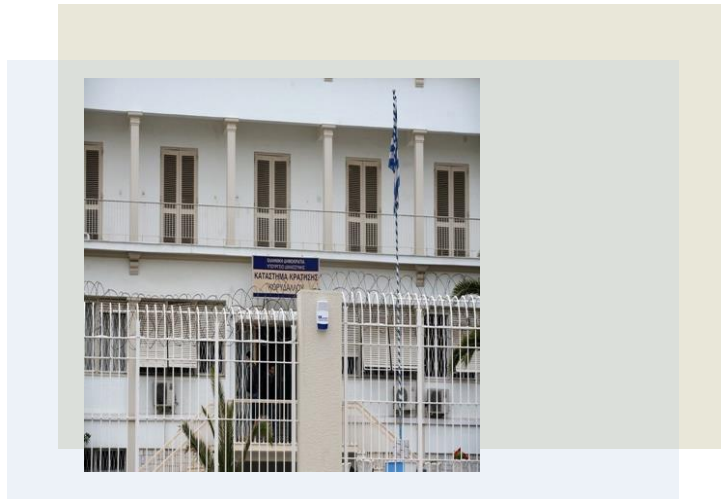


Detention Conditions and Education in Prison

Statement released regarding the transfer of the detainee V. Dimakis (30 April 2020)

<https://www.nchr.gr/ta-nea-mas/1068->

[%CE%B4%CE%AE%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%B5%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CF%85%CF%80%CF%8C%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B3%CF%89%CE%B3%CE%AE%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B2-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AC%CE%BA%CE%B7.html](https://www.nchr.gr/ta-nea-mas/1068-%CE%B4%CE%AE%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%B5%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CF%85%CF%80%CF%8C%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B3%CF%89%CE%B3%CE%AE%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B2-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AC%CE%BA%CE%B7.html)



New statement released regarding the transfer of the detainee V. Dimakis (14 May 2020)

<https://www.nchr.gr/ta-nea-mas/896-%CE%BD%CE%AD%CE%B1-%CE%B4%CE%AE%CE%BB%CF%89%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82-%CE%B5%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B1-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%BD-%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%BF-%CF%86%CE%BF%CE%B9%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%84%CE%AE-%CE%B2-%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%AC%CE%BA%CE%B7.html>

Particularly urgent statement released regarding the transfer of the detainee V. Dimakis (25 May 2020)

Written submission to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on the occasion of the 45th Session of the Human Rights Council, 14 September – 6 October 2020 (September 2020)





Cultural heritage

Statement released on the conversion of the church of Hagia (Saint) Sophia into a mosque (July 2020)



Conscientious Objectors

*Submission on the 3rd National Report of Greece. Developments regarding Article 1§2
Service alternative to military service (June 2020)*

*https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/paidia/Comments_CRC_Protocol_final.pdf
Submission on the 3rd National Report of Greece.*



The GNCHR as a bridge builder between the State and the Civil Society

Operating at the crossroads between the State and the non-State actors and in the context of its institutional role as an NHRI, the GNCHR has a mission which, *inter alia*, includes building bridges between the State and Civil Society. As a reliable and constructive interlocutor with both the State and Civil Society, the GNCHR shall open channels of communication between the Government and Non-Governmental Organisations and other Civil Society organisations, in order, not only to contribute to the more effective protection of human rights, but also to maximise the efficiency of its work, thereby bringing closer together all actors sharing common ground in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Consequently, the GNCHR, the State and Civil Society, mutually benefit from their cooperation and interaction, not only in terms of the in-depth knowledge, specialised expertise and valuable experience that Civil Society actors provide on Human Rights protection issues, but also in terms of getting closer to citizens and the rights violations they are confronted with on a daily basis. On the other hand, Civil Society can also benefit significantly from its cooperation with the NHRIs and the State, to the extent that by taking advantage of the opportunity to forward its requests to public authorities, it is given the chance to maximise its influence on the decision-making bodies.

The GNCHR as interlocutor with National Authorities

The role of the GNCHR in the Hellenic Parliament

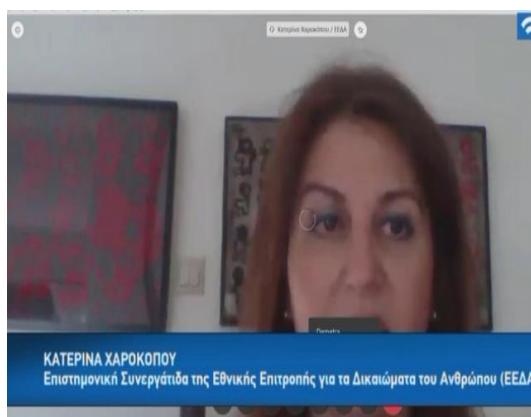
The GNCHR closely cooperates with the Parliament and its competent Legislative Committees. Pursuant to the provisions of its Law of establishment and its Regulation, the GNCHR shall submit its Annual Report to the President of the Parliament, which shall be discussed before the Special Permanent Committee on Equality, Youth and Human Rights of the Hellenic Parliament. Furthermore, in the context of its general advisory role to the State (Article 12, Law 4780/2021), the GNCHR maintains an open channel of communication with the Parliament and its bodies, by submitting its observations on bills or Law proposals that are up for voting or by putting forward proposals or recommendations for the improvement of the legislation in force or for the adoption of new legislation. In parallel, the GNCHR participates in sessions of the Standing or Special Permanent Parliamentary Committees, upon invitation, in order to contribute to the more effective protection and promotion of human rights, as well as to further dissemination of its proposals and recommendations.

In 2020, the GNCHR participated in the sessions of the following Parliamentary Committees:

Participation of the GNCHR in the session of the Parliamentarian Standing Committee on Public Administration, Public Order and Justice on the Bill of Ministry for Migration and Asylum, entitled, "Improvement of legislation on migration, amendment of provisions of Laws 4636/2019 (A 169), 4375/2016 (A 51), 4251/2014 (A 80)". The GNCHR was represented by its President Maria Gavouneli, the Chair of the GNCHR Third Sub-Commission Spyros Apergis and Eva Tzavala, on behalf of the GNCHR Specialised Scientific Staff. (6 May 2020)



Participation of the GNCHR in the session of the Parliamentarian Special Permanent Committee on Equality, Youth and Human Rights entitled, "Domestic Violence in the days of coronavirus "Women's organisations giving testimonies about their personal experiences". The GNCHR was represented by Katerina Charokopou, on behalf of the GNCHR Specialised Scientific Staff (22 May 2020)



Participation in the National Mechanism for the Developing, Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Action Plan for Children's Rights (NAP) constituted by virtue of decision 83559/15oik./10.3.2016 of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights (14 January 2020)



Participation in the Interministerial Committee in view of the preparation of the Greek Presidency of the Council of Europe's (CoE) Committee of Ministers (5 May 2020)



Visit of a delegation of the GNCHR to the Asylum Service and the Branches of Regional Asylum Office of Attica and meeting with the Asylum Service Director, Markos Karavias (7 February 2020)

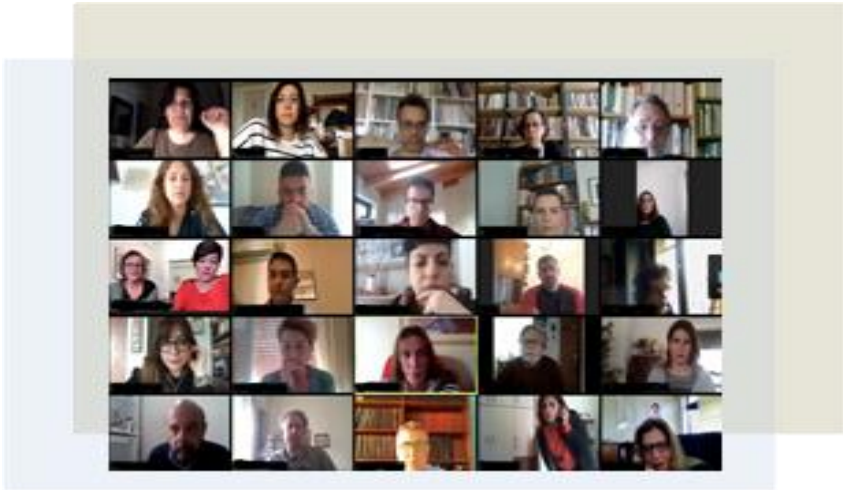


Meeting of a delegation of the GNCHR with the Minister of Migration and Asylum, Notis Mitarakis (14 February 2020)

Meeting of the GNCHR Bureau with the President and the Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Civil and Criminal Court (Areios Pagos), Iosif Tsalaganidis and Vasileios Plotas, correspondingly (17 February 2020)

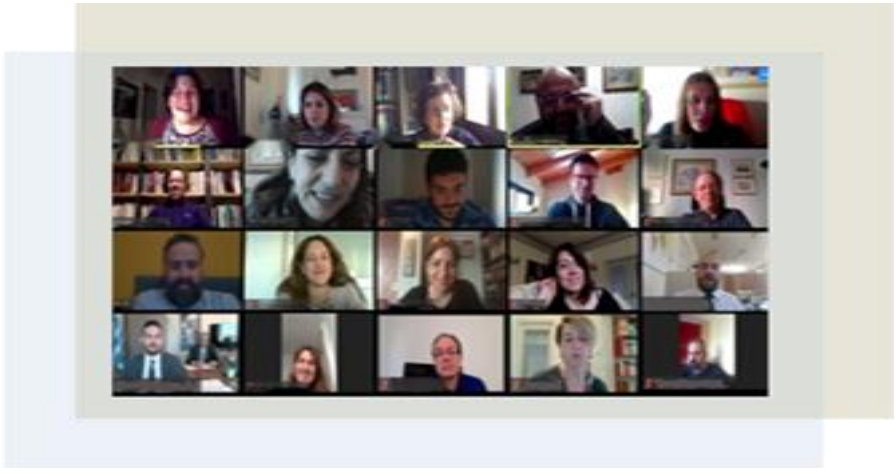


Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the situation in the detention facilities of the country and the protection measures applying against the COVID-19 pandemic by representatives of the General Secretariat for Anticrime Policy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection (8 March 2020)



Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the situation in the reception and identification centres of migrants and refugees and in all camps throughout the country and the protection measures applying against the COVID-19 pandemic by the Secretary-General of the Reception of Asylum Seekers of the Ministry for Migration and Asylum, Emmanouil Logothetis (8 April 2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on issues of domestic violence by the Secretary-General of Family Policy & Gender Equality, the City of Athens and “Diotima” Centre for Women's Studies and Research (22 April 2020)



Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the situation in (a) the Roma camps and (b) the old people's homes by the Secretary-General of Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation (22 April 2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the protection measures applying to vulnerable groups by the (a) National Public Health Organisation (EOΔY) and (b) Civil Protection and Crisis Management Agency of the Ministry of Citizen Protection (29 April 2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the Bill entitled, "Improvement of legislation on migration, amendment of provisions of Laws 4636/2019 (Government Gazette A 169), 4375/2016 (Government Gazette A 51), 4251/2014 (Government Gazette A 80) and other provisions" by the (a) Minister for Migration and Asylum (b) Secretary-General for the Reception of Asylum Seekers and (c) Secretary Special for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors and National Coordinator for Unaccompanied Refugees (29 April 2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the Bill entitled, "Modernisation of environmental legislation, transposition into the Greek legislation of Directives 2018/844 and 2019/692 of the European Parliament and the Council and other provisions" by the Ministry for the Environment and Energy along with environmental organisations (6 May 2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on the right of access to education by the Secretary-General of Primary, Secondary and Special Education of the Ministry for Education and Religious Affairs (3.6.2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary in connection with the reform of the family Law by a representative of the Special Legal Preparatory Committee for the amendment of family law (23 September 2020)

Meeting of the GNCHR Bureau with the Secretary-General for Citizenship of the Ministry of Interior and debate with Members of Naturalisation Committees (4.11.2020)

Briefing of the GNCHR Plenary on matters pertaining to human rights under the competence of the Ministry of Justice, by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice, Panos Alexandris (12.11.2020)

The GNCHR as interlocutor with Civil Society

Apart from the national stakeholders-partners of the NHRIs, Civil Society is a firm and essential ally, in their mission to promote and protect human rights, with which shall maintain regular and constructive interaction and cooperation. Besides, the term "Civil Society", according to the Paris Principles, includes not only NGOs active in the field of Human Rights, but also representatives of philosophical and political thought, as well as eminent scientists, qualified experts and representatives of universities (Paris Principles, (B) (a)(b) and (c)). Moreover, it is no coincidence that "in view of

the fundamental role played by the non-governmental organisations in expanding the work of the national institutions” the NHRIs are entrusted by the Paris Principles to “develop relations with the non-governmental organisations devoted to promoting and protecting human rights, to economic and social development, to combating racism, to protecting particularly vulnerable groups (especially children, migrant workers, refugees, physically and mentally disabled persons) or to other specialised areas.”(Paris Principles, (C) (g)).

Hearings of persons and national stakeholders

The national legislator, acknowledging the role of the GNCHR as the Greek NHRI that bridges the gap between civil society and the State, bringing them closer together, entrusts it with the competence to “invite persons to be heard before it who can assist its work by an account of personal experiences or the expression of views in connection with human rights protection.” (Law 2667/1998, Article 4, (5)).

In 2020 the GNCHR organised six (6) hearings of persons and national stakeholders:

1. Hearing of persons and national stakeholders and debate on the, “Right to cultural environment and protection of cultural heritage” (29 January 2020)

2. Hearing of persons and national stakeholders and debate entitled, “Introductory meeting and exchange of views with environmental organisations” (3 February 2020).

3. Hearing of persons and national stakeholders and debate on the “Recognition of victims of torture: institutional framework, assessment and gaps in the law implementation” (4 March 2020).

4. Hearing of persons and national stakeholders and debate on migration and refugee issues (18 June 2020)

5. Hearing of persons and national stakeholders and debate on issues related to international protection and social security cover for refugees (6 July 2020)

6. Hearing of Naturalisation Committees members to debate on the current functioning of the Naturalisation Committees and the assessment of their work (2 November 2020)

Racist Violence Recording Network

The Racist Violence Recording Network was established on the initiative of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (UNHCR), in mid-year 2011, on the basis of two important facts: a) the absence of a formal and effective system for recording incidents of racist violence and b) the need for liaisons to be created among actors which record on their own initiative those incidents reported by persons who sought their services.

The RVRN is comprised of agencies providing medical, social, legal services and/or coming in direct contact with victims of racist violence or victims of other hate or bias motivated violent attacks and organisations set up by the very groups that are usually targeted by racist violence.

Respect for human rights, diversity, multiculturalism, secularism as well as action to address discrimination and intolerance are prerequisites for participation in the Network.

Apart from the UN High EEΔA Refugees and the GNCHR, which are the coordinators, the Network is made up of 52 NGOs and civil society organisations, and is observed by the Greek Ombudsman and the Migrant and Refugee Integration Council of the Municipality of Athens.

In 2020, the members of the Network were: Aitima, Solidarity Now, Antigone - Information and Documentation Centre, University of Aegean Anti-Racist Observatory, Arsis, Doctors of the World (MDM), Amnesty International, Network for Children's Rights, Network for Social Support of Refugees and Immigrants, "Pleiades - Hellenic Action for Human Rights", Hellenic League for Human Rights, Hellenic Red Cross, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Migrants, Greek Forum of Refugees, Human Rights Commission of the Bar Association of Rhodes, Positive Voice, Medical Intervention, Caritas Athens, Caritas Hellas, Centre for Research on Women's Issues "Diotima", Centre for Life, "Babel" Day Centre, SYNYPARXIS (Coexistence) - Ecumenical Refugee Programme, Network for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Patras), World Without Wars and Violence, LATHRA - Solidarity Committee for Chios refugees, METAdrasi, Rainbow Families, Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, Group of Lawyers for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Thessaloniki), Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece, Association of Afghans United In Greece, Association of Social Workers of Greece, Greek Transgender Support Association, Faros tou Kosmou (NGO), Refugee Support Aegean,

Act Up Hellas, ASANTE (NGO), Colour Youth - LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens, Generation 2.0 RED, HIAS in Greece, HumanRights360, Melissa Network, PRAKSIS, A21, Simeio (Point) for studying and fighting against the far-right, Lesvos Solidarity, Steps, Legal Centre Lesvos, Aegean Migrant Solidarity | Christian Peacemaker Teams, ELLAN PASSE, International Rescue Committee (IRC).

The participants in the Network recognise and pursue as their common goal the fight against racist violence as well as all hatred-inciting acts hate on grounds of race, colour, religion, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, identity gender, gender characteristics, and disability.

For the purposes of the Network, incidents of racist violence are considered criminal acts or violent acts or behaviours against individuals, who are targeted based on national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Criminal acts or violent acts or behaviours against human rights defenders, namely those who promote and protect human rights and are targeted by reason of their status, are also recorded.

In pursuit of the common goal, the Network: a) shall submit recommendations to the Greek authorities pursuant to the Greek and international legal framework on human rights b) shall promote providing information on and raising public awareness on the fight against racism c) shall consult on specific issues related to racist violence d) shall increase cooperation with other bodies competent to combat racist violence e) shall organise and participate in training programmes for civil society and relevant institutional actors on issues related to identifying, recording and tackling hate crimes.

Since October 2011, the starting point of the recordings, until today, the activity of the Network has been constantly expanding. The Network participates in institutional initiatives aiming at improving the way in which racist crime is being addressed and seeks to raise awareness of racist crime in every possible way. To that end, it responds to a particularly high number of requests for information from researchers, journalists, and students. Moreover, by participating in seminars, trainings, and public debates, the Network contributes to the dissemination of legislation against racism and racist crime. The acknowledgement of the role of the Network in the fight against racist crime is reflected in the frequent invitations that it receives from international and European organisations, national institutions and other agencies and actors, with a view to present its collected data and give an analysis of its way of operation and the following methodology.

**PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT INTERNATIONAL
AND REGIONAL LEVEL**

Cooperation of the GNCHR with the international and regional systems for the protection of Human Rights.

The need for the NHRIs to contribute to the promotion and protection of Human Rights beyond national borders is also highlighted by the Paris Principles, which even place the international obligations of the NHRIs at the core of their responsibilities. More precisely, the Paris Principles stipulate that NHRIs are obliged “to cooperate with the United Nations and any other organisation in the United Nations system, the regional institutions and the national institutions of other countries that are competent in the areas of the protection and promotion of human rights” (Part I, (3)(iii)(e)), “to encourage ratification of the above-mentioned instruments or accession to those instruments, and to ensure their implementation” (Part I, (3)(iii)(c)) as well as “to contribute to the reports which States are required to submit to United Nations bodies and committees, and to regional institutions, pursuant to their treaty obligations and where necessary, to express an opinion on the subject, with due respect for their independence” (Part I, (3)(iii)(d)). Besides, in order “to promote and ensure the harmonisation of national legislation, regulations and practices with the international human rights instruments to which the State is a party, and their effective implementation” (Part I, (3)(iii)(b)) the NHRIs must have a thorough knowledge of international human rights law. After all, it is no coincidence that NHRIs who comply with the Paris Principles are steadily gaining in stature within the Human Rights system and are being recognised as special entities competent, to transpose and implement international Human Rights law at national level on the one hand and to contribute expertise and experience in regional and international *fora*, on the other hand.

It is worth noting that NHRIs and other institutions active in the field of human rights at international or regional level, are connected in a way that makes them mutually beneficial and dependent. The international system for the protection of human rights is relying on the NHRIs, in order to get all the important information, independently and objectively, concerning the Human Rights situation in their Country. The NHRIs yet use their international *status* to enhance the human rights protection framework at national level as much as possible, by actively interacting with their counterparts and learning from their best practices.

Throughout 2019, the GNCHR has fulfilled its mission responsibly, by taking part in a number of meetings or other international and European initiatives, at international and European level, by making interventions in international and European *fora* and by contributing actively and effectively, to the elaboration of texts and policies.

Contribution to UN Bodies

The contribution of the GNCHR as the independent advisory body of the State, to the promotion and protection of human rights, consists, among other things, of the

monitoring, on the one hand, of the alignment of national legislation with international obligations and, on the other, of the effective implementation of these obligations in practice. In this context, the GNCHR develops the actions of:

- encouraging the ratification of the international human rights instruments (Lists of International and European Conventions on Human Rights)
- contributing to the reports submitted by Greece to the United Nations Bodies and Committees, such as before the Treaty Bodies of the Human Rights Protection Conventions and the Universal Periodic Review mechanism of the Human Rights Council,
- submitting "shadow" reports before the above mentioned monitoring mechanisms during the process of periodic review of the implementation of the international conventions that bind Greece,
- providing information to, maintaining communication and cooperating with UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups visiting Greece in the context of their responsibilities and/or during the preparation of general or special human rights reports on Greece.

More specifically, in 2020 the GNCHR participated in the following procedures:



[UN Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)

Contribution with information relevant to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (January 2020) https://nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/paidia/GNCHR_Submission_to_UNCRC.pdf

[Committee on Enforced Disappearances \(CED\)](#)

Contribution to the Initial Report of Greece on the Implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, by submitting Observations to the Head of the UN for the Enforced Returns, Ayat Mohammed (June 2020)



[UN General Assembly](#)

Communication to the President of the UN General Assembly and the co-facilitators for the review of the UN human rights treaty body system (July 2020)

Human Rights Council (HRC)

Video-recorded Statement by the President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, presented during the 45th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council on the fire in Moria (Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention) (September 2020)



UNWG on Arbitrary Detention

Written submission to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on the occasion of the 45th Session of the Human Rights Council, 14 September – 6 October 2020 (September 2020)

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The GNCHR made a statement before the CEDAW (November 2020)

GNCHR input of Information relevant to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW) (November 2020)
https://www.nchr.gr/images/English_Site/GYNAIKES/GNCHR_Information_on_CEDAW.pdf

Contribution to the Bodies of the Council of Europe

Committee of Ministers

Recommendations with regard to the immediate full compliance of the Greek government with the landmark ECtHR judgment, Chowdury and others v. Greece (known as the "Manolada case")

https://www.nchr.gr/images/English_Site/TRAFFICKING/GNCHR%20Recommendations%20on%20the%20Manolada%20case.pdf

Communication under Rule 9(2) on the execution of the judgement Greece (21884/15) to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (June 2020)

https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/emporias_anthropwn/GNCHR-Communication_on_the_level_of_compliance_of_Greece_with_Manolada_judgement.pdf

European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)

The GNCHR Submitted Observations on the 3rd Greece's national report on the Implementation of the European Social Charter Developments regarding Article 1§2 Service alternative to military service

https://www.nchr.gr/images/pdf/apofaseis/paidia/Comments_CRC_Protocol_final.pdf

Cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)

Since being a "natural ally" of all institutions and monitoring mechanisms of the Council of Europe for the promotion and protection of human rights, including therefore the ECtHR, the GNCHR helps to enhance the effectiveness of the Court's case-law by intervening at both stages of its production: prior the delivery of judgements, with a view to prevent and inform about violations and after the delivery of judgements, by acting as a facilitator in the execution of judgements and the prevention of recurrent violations.

It can hence be considered that the cooperation between the GNCHR and the ECHR is multi-level and comprises:

- The translation on behalf of the GNCHR of the ECtHR's Factsheets, available on the official website of the Court into the Greek language. [The translation of the ECtHR factsheets in Greek is available on the official website of the Court, on the basis of the ECtHR's cooperation with the GNCHR.](#)
- The invocation of or references to the GNCHR [reports, positions and recommendations](#), in the judgements of the Court.
- The GNCHR participation in the broader debate on the reform of the ECHR and moreover the EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Strasbourg system.

In addition, regarding the submission of an appeal before the ECtHR, the GNCHR provides [guidance and information in Greek](#) on its website, with a link to the ECHR website.

The GNCHR is committed to promoting the work of the Council of Europe and monitoring the implementation of the ECtHR's judgements through:

- collecting and continuous updating of all [ECtHR's judgments against Greece](#);
- putting emphasis on the list of cases on standard or enhanced supervision procedure
- submitting an intervention before the Committee of Ministers (CM) under Rule 9(2) of the Regulation of the CM for judgements under enhanced supervision, when necessary.

Monitoring the implementation of the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights in Greece.

Introductory Report and Methodology (December 2019)

Finally, the GNCHR in the context of its broader strategy for the three-year period 2019-2021 towards developing both in methodological and practical terms a Human Rights Impact Assessment mechanism in Greece, took the initiative to prepare, coordinate and launch in the national legal order a useful tool that will substantially facilitate the Greek State and Civil Society, in monitoring more effectively the implementation of ECtHR judgements. To this end, and following the present Report which is aiming at introducing in general terms the execution and the supervision of the execution of ECtHR judgements in the Greek legal order, the GNCHR was engaged to translate into the Greek language and subsequently publish on a regular basis extracts from documents, for example passages from the action plans of the Greek State, summaries of cases as well as decisions of the Committee of Ministers on group judgements against Greece in cases placed under enhanced supervision and group judgements against Greece in cases placed under standard supervision. This national project seeks to fill an important gap, through translation and systematic compilation of the most important ECtHR judgements to be monitored, after their placement under the supervision of the Council of Ministers, to make this material more easily accessible to the Civil Society and, ultimately, to provide assistance to the Greek Authorities concerning the more effective implementation of ECtHR judgements in Greece.

[Responding to requests for information and completing questionnaire surveys](#)

Throughout 2020, the GNCHR responded to requests for providing information and completing questionnaire surveys, as follows:

Contribution from the GNCHR to the joint questionnaire of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights

Institutions, in view of the preparation for the 2nd interactive dialogue meeting on the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities held in Geneva on 13 March 2020 (7 February 2020)

Input from the GNCHR to the questionnaire of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) following a request from the Ministry of the Interior entitled: Victimisation and crime surveys in EU Member States that include questions on hate crime February 2020)



Contribution from the GNCHR to the questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding the Guidelines for cooperation between the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (NHRIs) (5 August 2020)

Activities of the GNCHR in the framework of the European and similar Commissions and NHRI Networks of other States

Throughout 2020, the GNCHR has responsibly fulfilled its mission to promote and protect Human Rights, by taking part in the work of the Global Alliance of the GANHRI and the ENNHRI, through its representation at Meetings and Conferences organised by both these Networks, by making presentations, interventions and effective contributions to the elaboration of relevant texts and policies.

Joint recommendations by the NHRIs of Greece, Germany, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as to the adoption of immediate measures to ensure respect for human rights at the external borders of the EU, also with regard to Covid-19 pandemic, entitled, "Joint Statement:

The situation at the EU external borders and the future European Asylum Policy" (April 2020)

Activities and Cooperation with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

GANHRI Annual Meeting 2020 (3-4 December 2020)

On 3 and 4 December 2020, more than 300 participants from NHRIs, UN partners and experts met online for the GANHRI 2020 Annual Meeting. The debate focused on innovative strategies and promising practices developed by the NHRIs, regarding the fulfilment of their mission to protect human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also exchange experiences on ways to address the impact of climate change on human rights and adopted a Declaration setting out their commitment to future actions they were to undertake. The GNCHR was represented by its President Maria Gavouneli.

GANHRI Extraordinary General Assembly 2020 with agenda items, the election of the appointed Chairperson, Dr Freddy Carrión Intriago, Ombudsman of Ecuador and the ratification of the new Bureau members appointed by their respective regional networks (26 October 2020)



Activities and Cooperation with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

ENNHRI Annual Conference and General Assembly. The GNCHR was represented by its President, Maria Gavouneli (Brussels, 5- 6 February 2020)

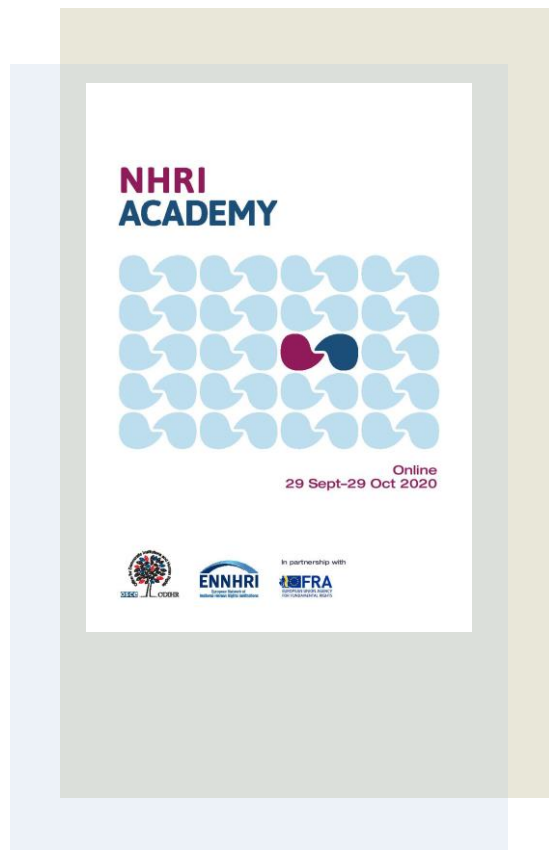
ENNHRI Board Elections and extension of the term of office of the European Member of the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (June 2020)

ENNHRI General Assembly Meeting 2020 (18 November 2020)

ENNHRI Annual Conference 2020 (02 December 2020)



NHRI Academy 2020: Framing migration from human rights perspective (29 September - 29 October 2020, on-line)



FOSTERING A CULTURE OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

According to the minimum standards set by the Paris Principles, the promotion of human rights is inextricably linked, inter alia, to raising public awareness, providing information and education and making effective use of the mass media (Paris Principles, Part I, (3) (g) incorporating, as defined by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), all those initiatives which contribute to the building of a culture of respect for human rights and raising public awareness on human rights issues. The be-all and end-all of the effective promotion of human rights is raising awareness. Information and education aimed at raising awareness of and disseminating knowledge about human rights is a key aspect of promotion, bearing in mind that the protection of human rights depends essentially on the degree to which citizens are aware of their rights and the mechanisms available to them for the implementation of those rights. However pivotal knowledge dissemination may be, it is not on its own sufficient enough to ensure a culture of respect for human rights. Determination of public Authorities and all actors involved in the promotion of human rights, is also a prerequisite, for the knowledge to be applied into practice. And this is where the NHRIs have a crucial role to play, which is not only limited to raising citizens' awareness of their rights, but also extends to encouraging and supporting State institutions to actually implement them, through public awareness-raising of human rights issues, on the one hand, and through human rights education and research, on the other.

Raising public awareness

The mission to promote human rights is undoubtedly best fulfilled by providing information and disseminating knowledge on the field and comprises actions such as, collection, production and dissemination of information material, planning of relevant promotional events and cooperation with mass media outlets. The common denominator of these actions is to raise public awareness of human rights issues and to inform citizens on their rights and the mechanisms available to protect them.

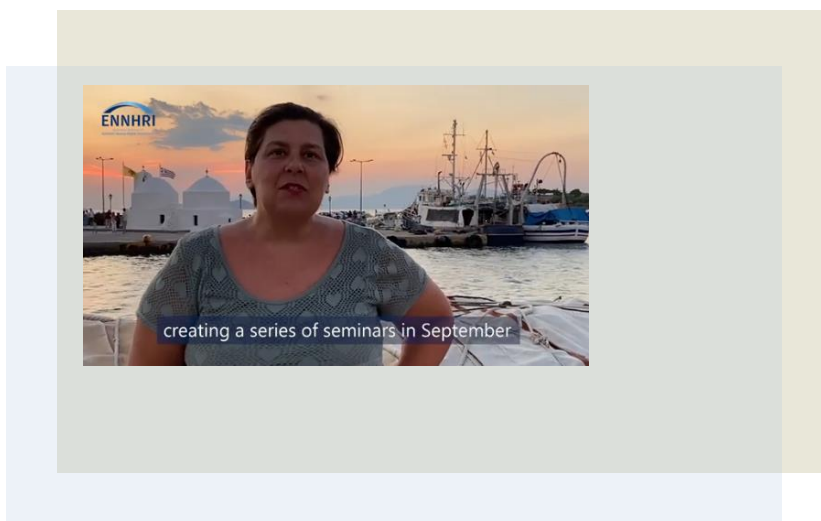
In light of the above observations and taking into account the provisions of the Constitutional Law of the GNCHR, which explicitly entrusts it with the development of initiatives to raise awareness of public opinion and mass media on matters of respect for human rights, (Law 2667/1998, Article 1(6) in 2020 the GNCHR launched the following initiatives for the promotion of human rights:

Actions / Initiatives to promote Human Rights

Visit of the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Michael O’Flaherty to the GNCHR premises (13 March 2020)



Message sent by the President of the GNCHR Maria Gavouneli, related to a series of webinars helping to strengthen NHRIs’ capacities in the implementation of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, hosted by ENNHRI.



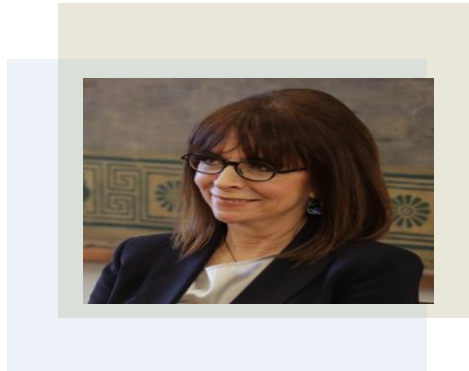
Press Conference and Debate on the occasion of the presentation of the 2019 Annual Report, of the Racist Violence Recording Network (16 June 2020)



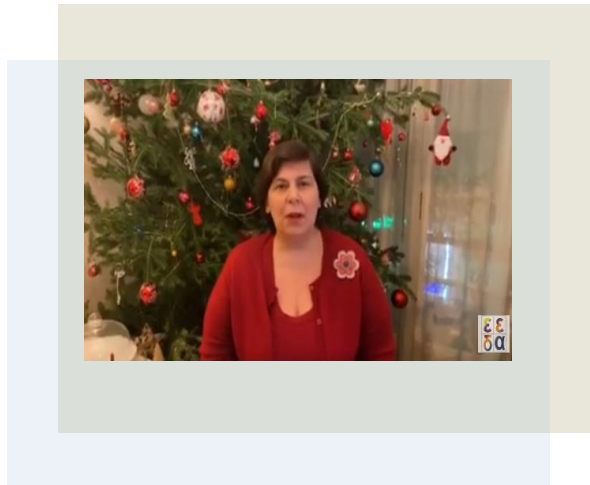
Message sent by the GNCHR regarding the judicial decision on the case of the far-right party "Golden Dawn" (HRISI AVGI) (12 October 2020)



The President of the Hellenic Republic, Aikaterini Sakellariopoulou, honoured the GNCHR Plenary with her presence, on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day (10 December 2020)

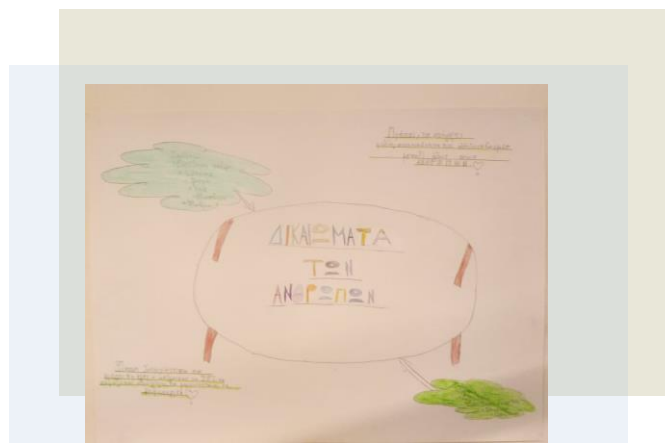


Message sent by the President of the GNCHR Maria Gavouneli on Human Rights Day (10 December 2020)



The GNCHR through the eyes of a child

The GNCHR took the initiative to develop a sub-page on its website, highlighting how children understand and deal with human rights.

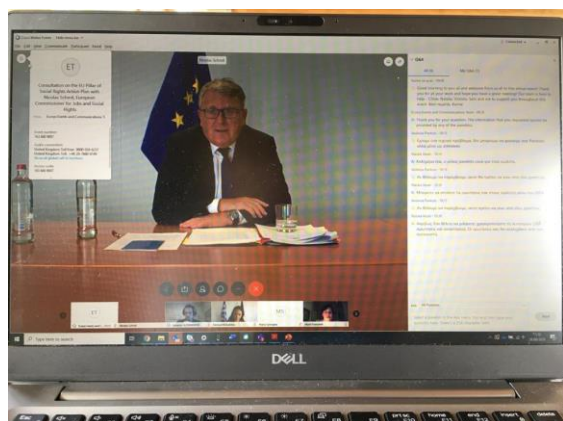
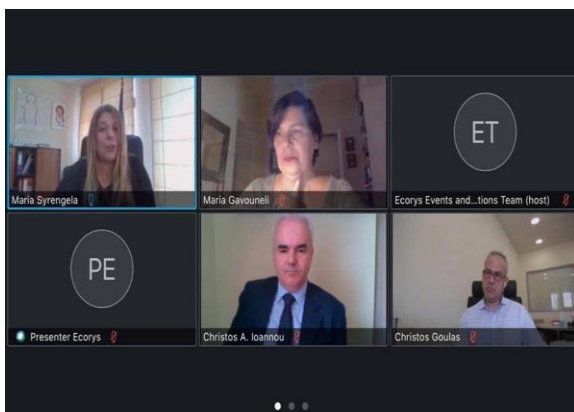


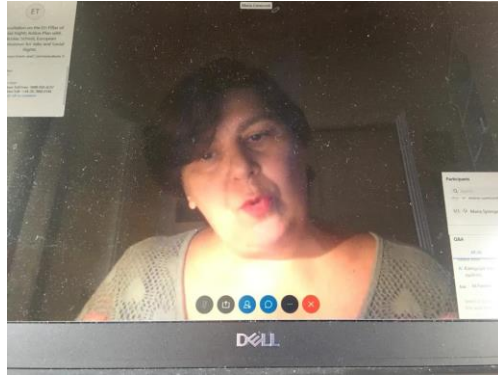
Participation in workshops and other events on the promotion of human rights

Participation of the President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, in a workshop entitled, “Newly emerging issues concerning the implementation of ECtHR judgements in Greece, focussing on the Legislative and Executive Powers” organised by the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights (IMΔA) and the Athens Public International Law Centre of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (19 February 2020)



Participation of the President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, in the Roadshow for Greece, organised by the Commissioner on Employment and Social Affairs for the future of Social Protection in Europe and held via the Delegation of the European Commission in Greece (26 June 2020)





Participation of the President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, in the online dialogue regarding the Asylum procedures in Greece and Europe, organised by the Greek forum of Refugees (here the relevant video) (26 February 2020)

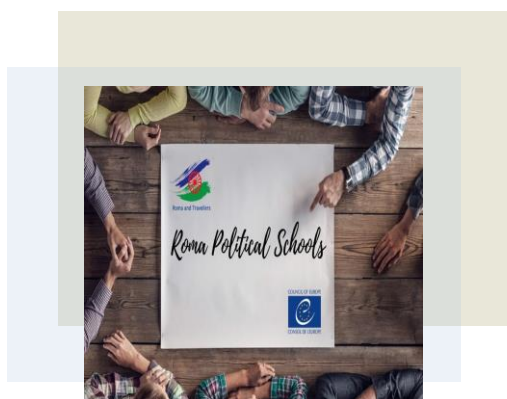


Participation of Eva Tzavala, on behalf of the Specialised Scientific Staff of the GNCHR, in the event organised on the occasion of the presentation of the EASO Asylum Report 2020 (25 June 2020)



Participation of the President and the Second Vice-President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli and Elli Varhalama in the online debate on the “Individual freedoms and Social Rights put at risk” organised by the Themistocles and Dimitris Tsatsos Foundation – Centre for European Constitutional Law (CECL) and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Institution (2 July 2020)

Participation of the President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, in the 2nd three-day training of the Council of Europe Roma Political Schools 2020 (6-8 November 2020)



Participation of the President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, in a thematic dialogue organised by the Themistocles and Dimitris Tsatsos Foundation – Centre for European Constitutional Law (CECL) on Democracy and Civic Education (12 November 2020)

ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑ MATCH
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Νέοι Πολίτες και Σύνταγμα
ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ & ΠΟΛΙΤΕΙΑΚΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

Θεματικός διάλογος
LIVE WEBCAST
9 Νοεμβρίου 2020 | 16:00-17:30

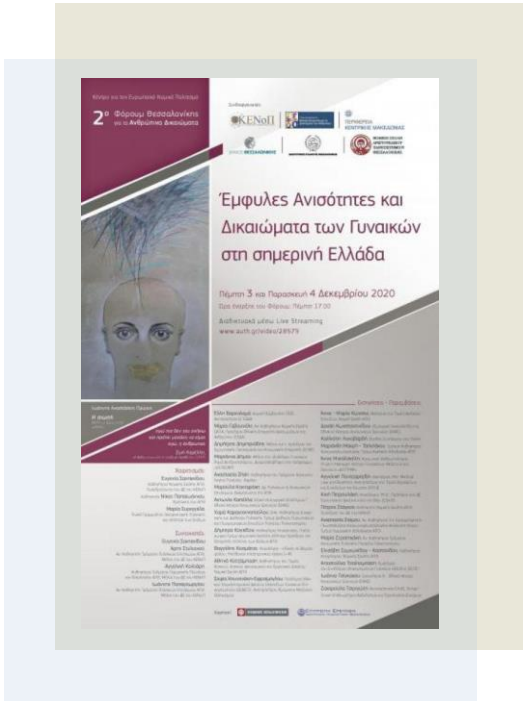
Εισηγητές:

- Κωνσταντίνος Κωνσταντίνου**
Πρόεδρος του Γενικού Νομικού Συμβουλίου του Κράτους
- Σπυρίδων Παπαδόπουλος**
Πρόεδρος του Κέντρου για τον Ευρωπαϊκό Σύνταγμα
- Μαρία Γαβουνέλι**
Πρόεδρος του Γενικού Νομικού Συμβουλίου του Κράτους
- Νίκος Γιαννιτσόπουλος**
Πρόεδρος του Κέντρου για τον Ευρωπαϊκό Σύνταγμα
- Αριστοτέλης Παπαδόπουλος**
Πρόεδρος του Κέντρου για τον Ευρωπαϊκό Σύνταγμα
- Αλεξάνδρα Κωνσταντίνου**
Πρόεδρος του Κέντρου για τον Ευρωπαϊκό Σύνταγμα

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ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟΥ ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑΤΙΚΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ
Themistocles and Dimitris Tsatsos Foundation

Co-organisation by the Centre for European Legal Culture (CELC) and the GNCHR of the 2nd Thessaloniki Forum on Human Rights in Greece and Europe, entitled, "Gender Inequalities and Women's Rights in Today's Greece" (3-4 December 2020)



ΓΙΑ ΤΗ ΣΥΜΜΕΤΟΧΗ ΣΑΣ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΗΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΩ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΙΣΜΟ
<https://hou.webex.com/hou/j.php?MTID=m99bee766b5f8998a15a5951a06c5b3ba>

GNCHR Press Releases

GNCHR Press Release entitled, "In the island of Samos the system has collapsed" (23 January 2020)

GNCHR Press Release entitled, "The election of the new President of the Hellenic Republic Aikaterini Sakellaropoulou" (23 January 2020)

GNCHR Press Release on the Hearing of national stakeholders organised by the GNCHR, regarding the issue of antiquities at the Venizelos Station of Thessaloniki Metro and the intention of the Commission to request a meeting with the Minister of Culture (30 January 2020)

GNCHR Press Release on the GNCHR Statement regarding the Review of asylum and migration policies and the protection of human rights at the EU's borders (5 March 2020)

GNCHR Press Release on emerging human rights issues during the COVID-19 pandemic - GNCHR Plenary online meeting (10 April 2020)

GNCHR Press Release entitled, "The President of the Hellenic Republic Aikaterini Sakellaropoulou: The quality and strength of our democracy depends on the level of the protection of our rights" (11 February 2020)

Interviews

*Intervention by the First Vice- President of the GNCHR Giannis Ioannidis in the radio programme "**Diary**" coordinated by the journalist Pavlos Tsimas (SKAI radio 100,3) on the recent visit of a delegation of the GNCHR to the island of Samos (23 January 2020)*

***"A deep trauma"** A written report by the First Vice- President of the GNCHR Giannis Ioannidis, on the Refugee issue*

The President of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli, was interviewed by the journalist Elena Chatziioannou, on the radio station ATHINA 9.84 (radio programme "Radio City"), on the occasion of the International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November 2020)

The President and the Vice-President of the GNCHR of the GNCHR, Maria Gavouneli and Georgios Stavropoulos were interviewed on the Hellenic Radio ("Programme A") (11 December 2020)

Human Rights Education and Training

Pursuant to the mission entrusted to it by the Greek legislator, regarding the cultivation of respect for human rights within the educational system as well as the development for initiatives for raising public and media awareness of matters of respect for human rights, the GNCHR reiterates that human rights education constitutes per se a fundamental human right, from which derives the obligation of both the NHRIs and the public or private actors, active in the field of human rights, to develop specific educational programmes and initiatives focused on the promotion of human rights.

It's for all these reasons, after all, that human rights education has been included in the hardcore of the GNCHR mission. More specifically, acknowledging that the cornerstone of human rights education is to launch and integrate international human rights standards and practices into people's daily lives, the GNCHR has taken the following initiatives, in 2020:

Annual (Open) Seminar Series entitled, "Training in human rights", organised at the premises of the Athens Bar Association (ΑΣΑ) (Second Series, October 2019 - February 2020)



Εκπαίδευση στα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου

Β' Κύκλος Σεμιναρίων

21 Οκτωβρίου 2019

Διακρίσεις στον χώρο της εργασίας

Α. Λεβέντη, Χ. Αγγέλη

4 Νοεμβρίου 2019

Τα δικαιώματα των Ρομά στην Ελλάδα

Χ. Ηλιάδης, Α. Καραγιάννη

18 Νοεμβρίου 2019

ΑμεΑ και Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου

Μ. Χριστοφή, Α. Παυλή

2 Δεκεμβρίου 2019

Η νομική προστασία της ταυτότητας φύλου

Μ. Γαλανού, Β. Σωτηρόπουλος

16 Δεκεμβρίου 2019

Θρησκευτική ελευθερία και επικρατούσα θρησκεία

Γ. Ιωαννίδης, Α. Παπαδοπούλου

13 Ιανουαρίου 2020

Το δικαίωμα στην αντίρρηση συνείδησης

Φ. Ιατρέλλης, Γ. Καρατζάς

27 Ιανουαρίου 2020

Το δικαίωμα στην προστασία της γενετικής ταυτότητας

Χ. Σαββάκης, Ε. Μάλλιος **Αίθουσα Εκδηλώσεων ΔΣΑ (Ακαδημίας 60, Αθήνα)**

16:00-18:00

10 Φεβρουαρίου 2020

Η πρόσβαση στην Ελληνική Ιθαγένεια

Ε. Ε. Πραδάν, Χ. Σαριτζόγλου

24 Φεβρουαρίου 2020

Το δικαίωμα στο απόρρητο της επικοινωνίας

Χ. Ράμμος, Αικ. Παπανικολάου

23 Μαρτίου 2020

Δικαιώματα και ελευθερίες στην εποχή της τεχνητής νοημοσύνης

Α. Μήτρου

6 Απριλίου 2020

Προσφυγικό ζήτημα και Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου

Α. Κωνσταντίνου

27 Απριλίου 2020

Το δικαίωμα στο περιβάλλον

Μ. Γαβουνέλη, Ε. Δούση

11 Μαΐου 2020

3:00-4:30μμ

Ρητορική μίσους

Τ. Σταυρινάκη



Εθνική Επιτροπή για τα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου

Πληροφορίες Σεμιναρίων: www.nchr.gr

Training programmes for professionals



The GNCHR conducts high-level educational and training programmes, designed to meet the particular needs of each professional field. In this context, it organises and conducts Series of Seminars for Prosecutors and participates in training activities for lawyers on a regular basis.



Training programmes in schools

The GNCHR develops and conducts understandable and child-friendly educational programmes, on matters related either to human rights, either its own functioning. In recent years, the GNCHR has been conducting training programmes on matters related to the history and evolution of human rights, the protection of the rights of the child, the right to education, women's rights, the respect for and enjoyment of human rights, racism and intolerance.

Training programmes for Higher Education Institutions Students

Within the scope of its powers to provide education in the field of human rights, the GNCHR has consistently responded to invitations directed to it, including presentations at conferences and the conduct of seminars and trainings on the protection of human rights, addressed to students of higher education institutions.

In this context, the Legal/Research Officer of the GNCHR, Eva Tzavala, made a presentation entitled, "Outsourcing of asylum processing and migration control in the EU and human rights implications", in 10 March 2020, during the Winter School of ELSA.

Encouraging ratification of international Human Rights instruments

As universal and inalienable for every human being, irrespective of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion or other beliefs, disability or chronic illness, age, marital or social status, sexual orientation, identity or gender characteristics, human rights, are legally enshrined at European, international and regional level by a large number of binding and non-binding texts. This internationalisation of the protection of human rights demonstrates that they have become a universal value and are no longer an internal State affair.

According to the minimum standards set by the Paris Principles, the NHRIs are entrusted, among others, with a very important responsibility: to encourage the accession, ratification and implementation of international human rights treaties (Part I (3) (iii) (c)). This is one of the essential functions of the NHRIs, which constitutes a - sometimes quite effective, though not always sufficient - leverage to the improvement of the human rights situation in the Country.

More precisely, in order to fulfil their mission, the NHRIs shall:

- keep abreast of developments in the field of international human rights law
- encourage the participation of the State in the promotion and development of international human rights standards
- assess the degree of compliance of the national Authorities with their international obligations, and the submission on their behalf, of the relevant reports, for example their contribution to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process or the publication of the annual and special reports
- support without reservations the ratification of treaties,.

For the NHRIs to be effective in their mission, it is necessary to stay informed systematically not only about of the legislation in force, but also any of any other laws up for voting, in order to ensure their compliance with human rights standards. At the same time, in this regard, NHRIs must keep State authorities informed of the scope and nature of any obligations arising from the State's accession to any international human rights conventions or the ratification of international treaties on human rights.

Aware of its responsibility as an NHRI and responding to its constitutional mandate, which inter alia, consists of: “The constant monitoring of the matters pertaining to human rights protection, the informing of the public and the advancement of research in this connection” (Law 2667/1998, Article 1 (5)(a) and of organising: “a Documentation Centre on human rights” Article 1(k), the GNCHR has collected and recorded in a single list international and European legally binding and non-binding texts on the protection of human rights, always with the aim to ensure the widest possible framework for the protection of human rights.

Cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) for the translation into Greek of the Court's factsheets

Since being a "natural ally" of all institutions and monitoring mechanisms of the Council of Europe for the promotion and protection of human rights, including therefore the ECtHR, the GNCHR helps to enhance the effectiveness of the Court's case-law by intervening at both stages of its production:

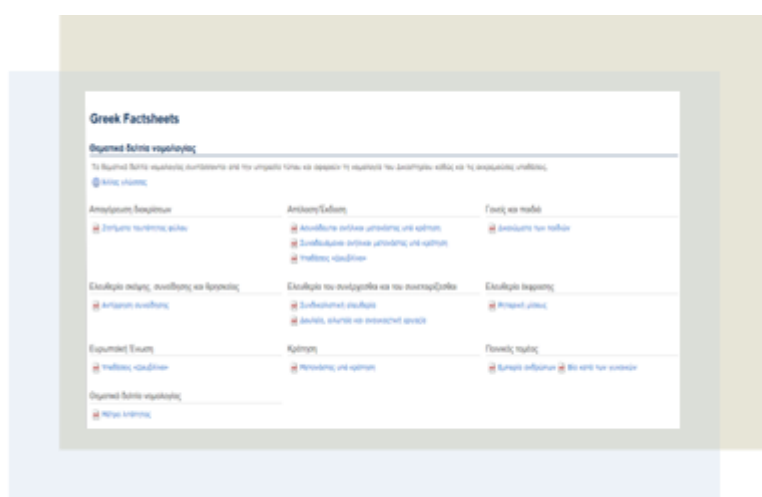
prior the delivery of judgements, with a view to prevent and inform about violations and after the delivery of judgements, by acting as a facilitator in the execution of judgements and the prevention of recurrent violations.

It can hence be considered that the cooperation between the GNCHR and the ECtHR is multilevel and comprises:

The translation on behalf of the GNCHR of the ECtHR's Factsheets, available on the official website of the Court into the Greek language.

Acknowledging the importance of these Factsheets, on December 2015, the GNCHR, in cooperation with the ECtHR, took the initiative to provide them translated into Greek, contributing that way to the dissemination of the ECHR case-law in our country.

On 29 June 2016, the ECtHR issued a press release dedicated to the Court's cooperation with the GNCHR in the context of which, the GNCHR translates the Thematic Factsheets on the Court's case-law.



Research in the field of Human Rights

This cooperation marks a very important step towards the now official interaction between the higher education institutions of the country and the GNCHR, aiming at fulfilling the latter's mission. More specifically, this cooperation facilitates the mission of the GNCHR through the contribution of the Greek higher education institutions in the research and documentation of recommendations, proposals, studies, reports and opinions elaborated and submitted by the GNCHR, in relation to the human rights situation in Greece. In addition, the opportunity for the students to kick-start their careers with an internship at the GNCHR, where specialised tasks are assigned to them, is also put in place on a permanent basis.

In the years 2018-2020, bilateral Protocols of Cooperation were signed (in chronological order) with:



- the Law School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- the Law School of the Democritus University of Thrace
- the Social Administration and Political Science Department of the Democritus

University of Thrace

- the Political Science and Public Administration Department of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- the Political Science and History Department of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
- the Law School of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens
- the Communication, Media and Culture Department of Panteion University
- the Social Anthropology Department of Panteion University of Athens
- the Political Science Department of the University of Crete
- the School of Economics and Public Administration of Panteion University of Athens

Furthermore, the GNCHR collaborates in particular with the Centre for European Legal Culture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (ΑΠΘ), the Region of Central Macedonia, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the Law School of the Aristotle

University of Thessaloniki and the Bar Association of Thessaloniki for the co-organisation of the Forum for Human Rights of Thessaloniki.

Official findings of the research of the Law School of the Democritus University of Thrace entitled: “The attitude of the Courts of First Instance (Πρωτοδικεία) of Thrace towards the decisions of the Religious Courts (Ierodeikeia) of Thrace from 2013 to 2019” (13 March 2020)

**IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GNCHR WORK AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

At national level

Impact and effectiveness of the GNCHR recommendations in law-making

Law 4686/ 2020, "Improvement of legislation on migration, amendment of provisions of laws 4636/2019 (A 169), 4375/2016 (A 51), 4251/2014 (A 80)".

Law 4703/2020, "Public open-air assemblies and other provisions" (Government Gazette A 131/10.7.2020)

Law 4735/ 2020, "Amendment of the Greek Citizenship Code, new framework for public sector administrations selection, regulation concerning organisational issues of the General Secretariat of Citizenship and the General Secretariat of Human Resources in the Public Sector of the Ministry of Interior, regulations concerning the development perspective and the proper functioning of Local Government Agencies" (Government Gazette A 197/12.10.2020)

Law 4756/2020, "Aid measures for workers and vulnerable social groups, social security legislation and provisions for the support of the unemployed" (Government Gazette A 235/26.11.2020)

At International and European Level

References by the UN bodies to the work accomplished by the GNCHR

The reference made by the UN Human Rights Council to the GNCHR

Human Rights Council, 44th session, 15 June–3 July 2020, Agenda item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, [Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls](#), 29.6.2020, A/HRC/44/51/Add.1

[...]

3. National Commission for Human Rights

16. The National Commission for Human Rights, a consultative and advisory body to the State, is an important independent voice on human rights, accredited with A status. The Commission does not have a dedicated focus on monitoring and eliminating discrimination against women embedded within its structure but addresses the issue in a cross-cutting manner in various areas of its work. As an independent national human rights institution, the Commission has a critical role in the monitoring of women's rights and must be adequately resourced and able to function independently and effectively.

[...]

58. A number of concerns remain, however. The National Commission for Human Rights has deplored the fact that, although there was a significant number of cases of domestic violence reported, very few perpetrators were prosecuted and punished. Raising awareness about domestic violence is still essential, given that patriarchal attitudes and deeply rooted stereotypes regarding the role and responsibilities of women and men, as well as discriminatory practices, persist. In 2014, 3,914 victims of domestic violence were identified; 1,197 prosecutions were initiated, and 307 convictions handed down. In 502 cases, the victims opted for a mediation procedure, which is provided in the context of restorative justice as an alternative in order to avoid protracted and arduous court proceedings.

59. According to the National Commission for Human Rights, statistical data on domestic violence are collected by the national police and are made publicly available. The data are disaggregated by gender and age of the victims only. Although the gender of the perpetrators is also provided, in a separate dataset, it is not linked to the data on the victim's gender. The number of female victims of male perpetrators can therefore not be assessed. Domestic violence has been exacerbated by the economic crisis. There has been a backlash against gender equality, manifesting itself in disproportionate job losses among women in the public sector and cuts to services that women are more likely to require. The loss of socioeconomic autonomy leaves women in a more vulnerable situation, often leaving them with no option but to return to abusive partners.

[...]

74. In 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted that austerity measures taken to address the economic crisis in Greece had had a disproportionate impact on minority groups, such as Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The Committee also expressed its concerns regarding the decrease in budgetary allocations to public institutions that worked on combating racial discrimination, such as the National Commission for Human Rights, the Ombudsman and the labour inspectorate.

See also: *Information submitted in July 2016 by the National Commission for Human Rights in relation to the implementation of the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in Greece*, available in: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/GRC/INT_CERD_IFN_GRC_24494_E.pdf

Human Rights Council, 45th session, 14 June–2 July 2020, Agenda item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, [Written submission by the Greece: National Commission for Human Rights](#), Written Submission to the

Interactive Dialogue of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, 15.9.2020, A/HRC/45/NI/5

GNCHR Written Submission to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on the occasion of the 45th Session of the Human Rights Council (14 September – 6 October 2020)

Introduction

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) as the National Institution on Human Rights Institution of Greece and the independent advisory body to the Greek State on matters pertaining to human rights protection accredited with an A status (full compliance with the Paris Principles) by the Sub-Committee of Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), has the mission to constantly monitor developments regarding human rights protection in Greece, to inform Greek public opinion about human rights-related issues and to provide guidelines to the Greek State towards the formulation of a modern, principled policy on human rights protection.

The GNCHR would like to thank the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention for visiting Greece and holding a meeting with its representatives. The GNCHR welcomes the Working Group's Report following its recent visit to Greece, and fully concurs that, whereas progress has been made, much remains to be done, mainly in practice.

Indeed, whereas the GNCHR has welcomed the ratification by Greece of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the designation of the Greek Ombudsman as the national preventive mechanism, the introduction of alternatives to detention into legislation and other related measures, the GNCHR still shares many of the Working Group's concerns as regards the conditions of detention in the criminal justice system, in the context of migration as well as in the social care system vis-à-vis persons with psychosocial disabilities. In particular, the GNCHR would like to raise the following points:

a. Criminal Justice

Several problems in the criminal justice system remain in place. The GNCHR took note of the reform of the Greek Criminal Code (CC) and Greek Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP). Both Codes have been adopted by Greek Law no.4637/2019. Their implementation in practice has been monitored very closely. In fact, the GNCHR has scheduled a follow-up public hearing to take place in September.

Regarding more specific matters and bearing in mind that excessively long periods of pre-trial detention are detrimental for the individual, the GNCHR reiterates its recommendations, according to which pre-trial detention must be reserved to exceptional cases and should be combined with the reduced imposition of penalties involving deprivation of liberty. The competent State authorities should take the necessary steps to ensure that pre-trial detention is only used in practice as an exceptional measure, as necessary and proportionate and in compliance with the presumption of innocence and the right to liberty. Its use should only be acceptable as a measure of last resort, in very limited circumstances.

The GNCHR concurs with the Working Group's conclusion that conditions of detention, including overcrowding, at facilities related to the criminal justice system do not generally meet international standards, which may affect a detainee's ability to participate in criminal proceedings and to present an effective defence.

Indeed, the GNCHR recalls that the Greek prison system suffers for long from structural deficiencies. Overcrowding is the most important of them. The GNCHR recognises the significant efforts made by the State, over the past years, to address the overcrowding in prisons with the adoption of Law 4322/2015 and the reforms leading to the earlier release of prisoners after completing part of their imprisonment. Indeed, the situation has improved since the total number of inmates has dropped by 20%. However, according to the most recent Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics, it is still more than ten thousand, a critical threshold affecting the whole prison system in Greece. Serious infrastructure and staffing problems have not been sufficiently dealt with. The GNCHR has addressed this issue in its Observations on the "Strategic plan for the prison system 2018-2020", in which it has proposed the basic principles that must guide the solutions attempting to deal with the deficiencies in detention conditions and the overcrowding of prisons.

Apart from the material conditions of penitentiary facilities in Greece, which face challenges, the GNCHR reiterates that gender identity, as a specific characteristic of particular vulnerability, is often

not respected by the competent authorities during detention. Indeed, according to the recordings of the Greek Transgendered Support Association (SYD), trans persons in detention or prison are often held with other persons based on their sex or in some cases they are even held in disciplinary isolation. This, inevitably, results to their additional stigmatisation, but mainly to sexual harassments, attacks and/or risk of rape. The GNCHR therefore reiterates the need for gender identity and gender diversity in general of detained persons to be respected.

The GNCHR also recalls that the Greek State should take appropriate measures to ensure fundamental legal safeguards and procedural guarantees, such as the right to legal assistance, including legal aid, as well as the right to interpretation, so that anyone who is arrested is informed in a language that he or she understands.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about additional challenges to the situation in the penitentiary facilities. The GNCHR raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of the measures so far taken. Organizations and detention monitoring bodies have already called for measures such as decongestion of prisons, the release of some detainees and quarantine measures for infected detainees. The GNCHR, taking into account the World Health Organization's recommendations and the epidemiologists' estimate regarding the high mortality risks of the population in prisons, called upon the competent State authorities to respect the rule of law and human rights standards and take immediate measures to improve current detention conditions (minimum sanitation conditions, medical care, personal protective equipment, etc.) and work towards the decongestion of penitentiary facilities.

b. Migration

In the context of migration, the GNCHR shares the Working Group's view that the new national legal framework on international protection is more restrictive in regard to the detention of applicants compared to previous legislation. By virtue of the last amendments to the legislative framework (Greek Laws 4636/2019 and 4686/2020), the detention measure was significantly strengthened, both in law and in practice and generalized, contrary to international standards and recommendations from international and national monitoring bodies. The GNCHR has already condemned the systematic and often arbitrary practice of administrative detention of asylum seekers and third-country nationals in return procedures, stressing the importance of using alternatives to detention. Detention should not constitute the rule rather the exception. In particular, with regard to applicants for international protection belonging to a vulnerable group, families with children and unaccompanied minors, the GNCHR advocates for the complete abolition of the detention measure which disproportionately affects their rights.

More particularly, the Working Group verified that the number of children in protective custody remains high and despite the increase of accommodation places for unaccompanied minors and the support offered to them by Greek officials, children are held for prolonged periods in conditions similar to those of criminal detention, which is contrary to the provisions of the European Convention for Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The GNCHR has repeatedly called the Greek State to abolish any administrative or de facto detention of migrant children for reasons related to their migratory status. In this regard, the GNCHR emphasized the immediate need to terminate the deprivation of liberty of unaccompanied minors kept under the "protective custody" regime and the implementation of alternatives in accordance with the best interests' principle. Therefore, the GNCHR welcomes the prioritization of the matter by the Working Group and endorses its relevant recommendations (par. 110 c).

Moreover, the Working Group identified shortages in the provision of interpretation services and legal aid to detainees impeding the effective exercise of their right to asylum. The GNCHR attaches great importance to the full respect of procedural guarantees in all asylum procedures and has called upon the State to secure that asylum seekers in detention and third country nationals in return procedures enjoy a real, unhindered access to a lawyer, a possibility to challenge the legality of the detention order as well as effective access to health services, especially in times of Covid-19 outbreak.

c. Social Care

The GNCHR concurs that the Greek State should take additional measures in relation to the deprivation of liberty in the context of psychosocial disability and social care. It should indeed continue prioritising deinstitutionalization whenever possible, with due regard to groups with additional vulnerabilities such as minors. In this respect, the GNCHR stresses the need for a deinstitutionalization strategy to be adopted by the Greek State.

With regard to the living conditions in psychiatric establishments, the competent State authorities should take the necessary steps to ensure that a strategy is adopted to end systemic overcrowding in psychiatric units in Greece. In particular, persons who do not require in-patient psychiatric care should not be placed in such care institutions. Patients in any psychiatric establishment enjoy sufficient privacy, in particular in terms of the number of patients accommodated in each room. It is suggested that all psychiatric patients, including long-term and forensic patients, be offered a range of recreational activities, including outdoor exercise, suited to their needs. In the interest of including immobile or less mobile patients, at least some of these activities should be offered within wards accommodating them.

With regard to the application of safeguards against ill-treatment in psychiatric establishments, the competent State authorities should take the necessary steps to ensure that persons admitted to them are provided with full, clear and accurate information, in an appropriate range of languages, setting out the facility's daily routine and patients' rights, including information on legal assistance and effective and free of charge – for indigent patients – access to legal representation, review of placement (and the patients' right to challenge this), consent to treatment and complaints procedures. Patients unable to understand this information should receive appropriate assistance. Moreover, involuntary placement procedures should offer guarantees of independence, impartiality and medical confidentiality, as well as of objective medical expertise. All injuries suffered by patients should be diligently recorded and the patients concerned should be examined by a doctor. Regarding long-term patients, the law should be amended so that the periodic review of their placement is explicitly required and that such a review is undertaken in practice. The significant monitoring gap concerning the private sector institutions should be remedied in such a way that appropriate external supervisory bodies are provided with the necessary resources to make frequent and unannounced visits to all places, including private clinics, where involuntary patients are hospitalised. As a general principle, all involuntary patients should benefit from facilitated contact with the outside world. Furthermore, the competent State authorities should communicate a clear message to staff of psychiatric establishments, that any behaviour of ill-treatment is unacceptable. Proper management should ensure that all staff members working in contact with patients are properly trained in verbal de-escalation skills and authorised control and restraint techniques.

In the closing, the GNCHR would like to express its support to the work of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention as well as its readiness to continue contributing on the basis of its mandate to the improvement of detention conditions in Greece. The GNCHR remains vigilant when it comes to safeguarding the full enjoyment without discrimination of human rights in Greece and remains at your disposal for any further information.

See also, [*Report on the need to protect human rights during the Covid-19 pandemic and recommendations to the Greek State*](#) (June 2020)

ALLOCATION OF THE GNCHR RESOURCES

GNCHR Financing

The GNCHR shall be financed for its operating expenditure and staff salaries from the national budget. More precisely, pursuant to the provisions of Law 2667/1998 Article 1(2) as in force, *“the operational expenditure of the Commission shall be charged to the State budget. The necessary appropriations shall be entered in the budget of the Ministry of Finance on an annual basis as a separate detailed expenditure account and with special code numbers. The allocation of appropriations shall be authorised by the Minister of Finance and commitment of expenditure shall be authorised by the Secretary General of the Government, as the principal authorising officer.”*

For 2020, the appropriations entered in the budget heading no: 1023-609-0000000 for the GNCHR, amounted to a total of EUR 189.000.

Allocation of Resources

Since the necessary appropriations of the GNCHR are entered in a separate detailed expenditure account, with special code numbers, the Commission is enabled to manage its resources according to the priorities set by itself. In particular, the staff of the GNCHR absorbs the greatest part of its budget expenditure, 150,000 Euros, as opposed to the GNCHR Members whose allowances barely absorb 6,000 of the GNCHR expenditure.¹

¹It should be noted that the majority of members of the GNCHR have waived their right to compensation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Law 2667/1998 (Government Gazette A 281/18.12.1998) establishing the GNCHR

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) was established by [Law 2667/1998](#) as the independent advisory body to the Greek State in accordance with the [Paris Principles](#) adopted by the United Nations ([General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/134](#), 20.12.1993, “National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights” NHRIs) and is the National Institution for the protection and promotion of Human Rights (NHRI) in Greece.

The Regulation of the GNCHR

GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (GNCHR)

RULES OF OPERATION

THE PRESIDENT

OF THE GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (GNCHR)

Taking into consideration:

- a) The provisions of Article 4(7) of Law 2667/1998 “Establishment of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights” (Government Gazette (GG) no. 281/A/1998), as amended by Article 12(11) of Government Act with legislative content () of 24 December 2015 (GG no.182/A/ 24.12.2015), which was ratified by Article One of Law 4366/2016 (GG no. 18/A/15.2.2016).
- b) The decision of the GNCHR Plenary dated June 13 2016 for drafting new Rules of Operation of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights.
- c) The fact that the provisions of the present act entail no expenditure under the national budget, we hereby decide:

ARTICLE 1

We hereby issue the Rules of Operation of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR), reading as follows:

“RULES OF OPERATION OF THE GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (GNCHR)”

1. The GNCHR was established and is functioning in accordance with Law 2667/1997 (GG no. 281/A/1998), as currently in force.

2. The GNCHR constitutes the independent national institution for the protection of human rights. In international relations, the term “Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)”, shall be used, in its true translation..

3. The mission of the GNCHR is defined in paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 1 and in Article 3 of Law 2667/1998, as currently in force.

4. The GNCHR Plenary.

4.1 The GNCHR Plenary consists of the Members stipulated in Article 2 of Law 2667/1998, as currently in force.

4.2 The persons appointed as GNCHR Members have proven knowledge and experience in the field of Human Rights protection.

4.3 The members of the new composition of the GNCHR are appointed at the latest two (2) months before the end of the term of office of the previous composition.. The President’s relevant invitation to the bodies that appoint the GNCHR members is posted on the website of the GNCHR.4.4. Bodies appointing GNCHR Members select the appropriate persons with transparency and in accordance with their specific rule of operation. The relevant decisions are published on the GNCHR website.

5. The President

5.1 The President is in charge of the constant overseeing, supervision and coordination of the work of the GNCHR. He or she shall represent it before any domestic or foreign Authority as well as before international organizations, equivalent national human rights institutions and their European and international network, as well as before non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

When the President is impeded, lacking or absent, the GNCHR shall be represented by the Vice-Presidents (1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President) in order of their rank.

5.2 The President may authorize a GNCHR Member to represent him/her, by reason of specialty, with regard to a specific issue in national or international conferences, conventions, meetings etc.

5.3 The President shall convene regular and extraordinary GNCHR sessions, preside at the sessions and sign, along with the person serving as secretary, the relevant minutes. In the event that the President is absent or impeded, he/she shall be substituted in the duties stipulated in this Article by the 1st and 2nd Vice-President in order of their rank.

5.4 The President, following a decision of the GNCHR or on his/her own initiative, summons to a hearing before the GNCHR persons that could facilitate its mission by expressing opinions concerning Human Rights protection or by presenting their personal experiences. The invitation is effected in any appropriate way.

5.5 The President shall coordinate the operation of the Sub-Commissions and the work of the specialist staff.

5.6 The President shall oversee the operation of the Secretariat of the GNCHR.

6. The Board

6.1 The Board consists of the President and the two Vice-Presidents.

6.2 The President shall draw up the agenda of the GNCHR sessions, in consultation with the two Vice-Presidents, and designate the rapporteurs.

6.3 The Board shall address current and urgent issues relating to the mission or the operation of the GNCHR in the interval between two regular Plenary sessions. To this end, and for the purpose of the effective planning of the work of the GNCHR, the Board shall meet at least twice a week. In the month of August, the Board members shall be alternately in charge of overseeing the operation of the GNCHR. In each Plenary session, the Board shall inform the GNCHR of these activities.

6.4 The Board shall coordinate the issue of publications, periodic or not, assisted by other GNCHR Members and the specialist staff.

7. Operation of the GNCHR

7.1 The GNCHR Plenary shall meet regularly at least every two months and extraordinarily following an invitation of the President or a request of at least five (5) of its Members. The invitation is sent in any appropriate way. Members are summoned to a regular session on the Secretary's responsibility at least eight (8) days prior to the session. The deadline is limited to three (3) days for the extraordinary sessions.

7.2 The GNCHR Plenary shall have a quorum when at least the absolute majority of its members is present in the specific session and among the present members the President of the Commission or one Vice-President is included.

7.3 The representatives of the Ministries, as referred to under Article 2(1) (k) of Law 2667/1998, as currently in force, inform at the beginning of each session the GNCHR

Plenary or the Sub-commissions on developments in the field of Human Rights in the field of their Ministry and retire before the debate for the decision making.

7.4 The decisions of the GNCHR Plenary shall be taken by a majority of the members present with voting rights. In the event of a tied vote, the President shall have the casting vote.

7.5 For every decision of the GNCHR Plenary, both views of the majority and the minority shall be recorded.

7.6 Minutes are kept under the President's responsibility by the Secretary of the Commission or, in case the latter is lacking or impeded, by a member of the Secretariat. If the GNCHR Plenary deems that for a particular issue it shall discuss and decide without the presence of a Secretary, minutes are kept by one of its members.

7.7 Full and alternate GNCHR members shall attend the sessions. Full members shall have voting rights and, in case they are absent or impeded, alternate members shall have voting rights as well.

7.8 The sessions of the GNCHR Plenary shall not be public.

7.9 The vote shall be open with the exception of [discussion on] GNCHR members' personal issues, where there shall be a secret ballot.

7.10 The GNCHR Plenary, by its decision, shall set, at the beginning of each semester, its areas of priorities for both the Plenary and the Sub-Commissions. Urgent issues or issues of great importance shall be added during the semester or shall be given priority for discussion.

7.11 Issues not included in the scope of the Sub-Commissions shall fall under the competence of the GNCHR Plenary. The GNCHR Plenary, by virtue of its decision, shall refer the examination and treatment of particular issues included in its mission to relevant Sub-Commissions.

8. Sub-commissions

8.1 Within the GNCHR operation the following Sub-commissions shall be established:

A) The Sub-commission for Civil and Political Rights

B) The Sub-commission for Social, Economic and Cultural Rights

C) The Sub-commission for the Application of Human Rights to Aliens

D) The Sub-commission for the Promotion of Human Rights (raising public awareness, mass media, education and other means)

E) The Sub-commission for International Communication and Cooperation (review of reports in compliance with Greece's conventional obligations, exchange of information and communication with international bodies, organisations etc.)

8.2 Sub-commissions shall cooperate on issues which inherently fall within the thematic competence of more than one Sub-commissions.

8.3 These Sub-commissions shall include full and alternate members, at their option, taking into consideration the need to balance participation in the Sub-commissions.

Each member shall participate at a maximum of two (2) Sub-commissions. There shall be a quorum when at least the absolute majority of the Sub-commission's members is present.

8.4 If a Sub-commission shall include the President or the Vice-Presidents, the latter shall chair this Sub-commission. The members of the remaining Sub-commissions shall elect a chairperson by relative majority. In all Sub-commissions members shall also elect the chairperson's alternate by relative majority. Full and alternate members who participate in the GNCHR Sub-commission, with the exception of representatives of Ministries, shall have the right to vote and be elected. The decision of the chairperson's election shall be revoked by the Sub-commission's members by absolute majority.

8.5 The chairperson shall have the responsibility of convening and running the Sub-commission, keeping the minutes, communicating with the GNCHR Plenary and the Board and updating them.

8.6 Sub-commissions shall regularly meet at least once a month and extraordinarily upon their member's decision.

8.7 Sub-commissions' decisions shall be made by an absolute majority of the present members. In any case, any minorities shall be recorded.

8.8 Sub-commissions' decisions are introduced to the Plenary which shall make the final decision. Once deemed meaningful, it shall decide when they shall be made public.

8.9 Sub-commissions' sessions shall not be public. Sub-commissions shall invite, at their own discretion, persons who can meaningfully contribute to addressing a particular issue on account of specialty or experience.

8.10 The GNCHR scientific staff shall assist Sub-Commissions in their operation and participate in their activities.

8.11 The Sub-Commissions shall express their opinions on the annual reports, which have been prepared by other authorities in compliance with Greece's conventional obligations and fall within their scope, once requested by the Fifth Sub-Commission.

8.12 The alternate members who participate in a session held by the Plenary or the Sub-Commissions', shall be entitled to the compensation in the form of a lump sum that full members receive.

9. Annual Report

9.1 The GNCHR shall prepare the annual Report in accordance with the provision of Article 1(h) of Law 2667/98, as in force.

9.2 The Sub-Commissions shall inform the Plenary of their activities by January 15th of each year.

9.3 The Ministries represented in the GNCHR shall submit by the end of each year information and observations about human rights protection falling within their mandate.

9.4 The GNCHR Report shall include all recommendations, proposals, reports and opinions which have been prepared during the year and which have emerged from issues raised by the Government, the Conference of Presidents of the Parliament and NGOs, or by initiatives of the GNCHR Plenary or Sub-Commissions. The GNCHR assessments of the general state of human rights in Greece or more specific issues that must receive special attention shall be included in the annual Report.

9.5 The Report shall be discussed at the Plenary upon the Board's suggestion and shall be approved by absolute majority. The minority opinion shall also be recorded in the Report.

9.6 The GNCHR publishes its annual Report following its submission to the Prime Minister and the Parliament.

9.7 Upon submission of the Annual Report to the Parliament, the GNCHR asks for its discussion in a pertinent session at a specific date.

10. Scientific and administrative support of the GNCHR

10.1 The GNCHR shall be scientifically supported by research officers who assist the GNCHR in terms of preparing reports, conducting scientific studies on issues assigned by the GNCHR Plenary or its Sub-Commissions, as well as updating about human rights developments in international governmental organisms and in international governmental or non-governmental organisations. Research officers shall organise an archive of texts and scientific studies and shall work on publications, periodic or not, which shall include the GNCHR activity and other material relating to human rights.

10.2 In line with Article 3 under Law 2667/98, the compilation of specialist studies may be assigned to working groups.

10.3 The GNCHR Secretariat is comprised of a Secretary and three employees for secretarial and technical support, appointed and remunerated in compliance with Article 8 of Law 2667/98, as in force. The Secretary shall manage the Secretariat. The President shall oversee its operation.

11. Term of office of the GNCHR and its members

11.1 The GNCHR has a term of office of three (3) years. Every stakeholder that appoints a GNCHR Member shall propose its replacement only for a compelling reason. For the replacement of a GNCHR Member the GNCHR Plenary shall decide by virtue of a decision adopted in accordance with paragraphs 7.2, 7.4 and 7.8 of the present Rules of Operation.

11.2 The representatives of the Ministries in the GNCHR shall be replaced upon proposal of the competent Minister for serious reasons attributable to the interests of service which impede their regular participation in the GNCHR activity. The new representative shall merely complete the ongoing term of office of his/her predecessor.

Article 2

The present decision shall be published in the Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic.

Athens, 1st August 2016

THE PRESIDENT

GEORGIOS STAVROPOULOS

Editors-in-chief:

Roxani Fragkou, Coordinator of the Scientific Organisation Unit, GNCHR

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