Regional report from ENNHRI session 1: Merida Declaration follow up
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Mr. chair,
Distinguished colleagues,

The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions welcomes today's session on the follow-up of the Merida Declaration. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are related to key human rights instruments and their implementation will therefore have a significant impact on the respect for and effective realization of human rights for everyone, everywhere. It is therefore critical for NHRIs to become fully engaged in the post-2015 Agenda.

The recent inclusion of the indicator "Existence of independent National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles" for Goal 16 is a major achievement that may strengthen NHRIs and open doors in the SDG follow-up and review process. The existence of strong NHRIs will have a catalytic impact on the implementation and monitoring of the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On the 25th and 26th of February 2016, ENNHRI members met in Berlin, hosted by the German Institute for Human Rights (GIHR), to discuss possible approaches in the implementation of the SDGs. During the meeting European NHRIs (1) exchanged ideas on how to influence the national follow-up processes of Agenda 2030, (2) identified the internal processes of the EU with regards to the implementation of the SDGs and what role ENNHRI can play in it and (3) decided upon next steps to be taken by ENNHRI.

The SDGs address the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development underpinned by human rights. European NHRIs noticed that there are currently no indicators foreseen on migration and refugees. This while we all know that here lies one of the most urgent problems for Europe and its neighbouring countries for the coming 15
years or even longer. If regions can introduce their own indicators this issue could be included. ENNHRI’s Asylum and Migration Working Group will look into this.

The activities of ENNHR are focused on the SDG implementation and monitoring process.

National Level

At the national level, members will share their experience on national implementation, action plans, indicators and monitoring. A tool will be developed among ENNHRI members to monitor the implementation of SDGs at the national level to report to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) is a member of the ICC Working Group and will coordinate the focal points of ENNHRI members. An ENNHRI Working Group might be established as well.

Regional level

During the meeting in Berlin, a representative of the European Commission presented the work of the EU on human rights and the SDGs. Currently the EU is mainly focusing on the external dimension but the European Commission is planning on involving various SDGs to monitor internal policies.

ENNHRI members will follow-up with the EU, the Council of Europe, the UNECE and other regional European actors. ENNHRI sees a role in monitoring the SDG implementation of the EU in internal and external policies.

International level

ENNHRI aims to participate in the HLPF and would like to discuss the reporting role of NHRIs there with GANHRI. We could for instance use our UPR reports in the HLPF. One first idea for a common activity was that GANHRI and the national members could in future annual reports to the HLPF raise the issue of “shrinking political space” for human right actors, civil society groups but potentially also for NHRIs to work. Political space will be needed if the SDGs shall be implemented meaningfully, because it will need national debates about necessary policy changes. It could become a sign post for GANHRI to be present with an annual report at the HLPF on this issue. Additionally, it was discussed that
GANHRI potentially could also organise side events. ENNHRI could also support the creation of a Special rapporteur on SDGs.

Thank you for your attention.