



Dear Ambassadors Nordlander and Danielsson,

As Sweden has taken over the Presidency of the European Union this month, we are writing to you to formally introduce you to the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) of NGOs. We are a group of over forty NGOs, all undertaking advocacy at an EU level, urging the EU to promote and protect all the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both within Member States and in its relations with third countries.

Human rights obligations are enshrined in the treaty basis of the EU, and the EU has created a number of instruments to protect and fulfil human rights at home and abroad. However, we, as a network of NGOs, strongly believe that the EU can and should do more to ensure that it delivers effectively on these human rights commitments. The impact of EU human rights tools is not currently measured, and they sometimes appear to be viewed by the EU institutions as an end in themselves, rather than as a means to bring about change. In addition, internal and external mechanisms are often not consistent and coherent with each other.

The organisations within the network range from international NGOs to smaller organizations based in one EU Member State, but we have come together as an informal network to pursue common goals of influencing EU and member states human rights policies and the programming of their funding instruments to promote democracy, human rights, justice and sustainable peace. Through our membership, we have a worldwide presence, and within the European Union, we are members of the Civil Society Contact Group, which is an alliance bringing together eight large rights and value based NGO sectors acting in the public interest. A number of our members attended the very successful NGO forum in Stockholm on July 6 and 7 and we look forward to collaborating with you on follow up to this event.

We would be pleased to act as your key interlocutor for information sharing with civil society on human rights and democracy issues, and to support the Presidency in organisation of events and involvement of civil society in relevant policy work. We would also kindly request that HRDN be involved in any policy developments on human rights in regional and thematic council working groups, in addition to the monthly debriefs from COHOM and PSC which our member organisations attend. The members of the co-ordination group of HRDN are at your disposal to act as your contact points in this manner:

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We look forward to working closely with you and wish the Swedish Presidency every success.

Yours sincerely

The Human Rights and Democracy Network



Cc:

Elinor Hammarskjold

Riina Kionka

Veronique Arnault

Heidi Hautala

PSC ambassadors

COHOM

Section for Human Rights of Department for International Law, Human Rights and Treaty Law, Swedish MoFA

Heads of Regional teams in Swedish MOFA

HRDN is comprised of: AEDH; Amnesty International; Aim for Human Rights; CBM EU Liaison Office; Church and Society Commission; CICC; Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers; Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Club of Madrid; December 18; Danish Institute for Human Rights; Euromediterranean Human Rights Network; European Peacebuilding Liaison Office; FIACAT; FIDH; Front Line; Human Rights Watch; Human Rights Without Frontiers; ICTJ; International Dalit Solidarity Network; ILGA; International Rescue Committee; International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims; ISCOS; La Strada International; Light for the World; Minority Rights Group International; OMCT; OSI; Peace Brigades International Colombia; Partners for Democratic Change International; Penal Reform International; Plan; Protection International; Quaker Council for European Affairs; REDRESS; Reporters sans Frontieres; Save the Children; Search for Common Ground; International Federation Terre des Hommes; World Vision.