

AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE NETWORK

Adopted December 1995, with amendments of November 1998 and October 1999.

Article 1

Initiator

The Human Rights House Foundation in Norway was established in 1989. Its object is to participate in establishing and assisting organizations promoting human rights – primarily human rights houses – and to establish and elaborate an international network between human rights houses.

The Human Rights House Foundation took the initiative to establish an international network - the Human Rights House Network - in September 1994.

Article 2

Name of the Network

The name of the international network is the Human Rights House Network.

Article 3

Object of the Network

The Network is an independent, non-profit and non-governmental initiative, not bound to any political parties or religious belief, whose object is to:

- strengthen structural and institutional development of civil society,
- unite efforts in protecting and promoting human rights,
- strengthen the organizational capacity and effectiveness of human rights NGOs,
- increase exchange of information between human rights NGOs,
- share practical experience,
- develop and carry out joint projects in the sphere of human rights.

Article 4

Object of a Member House

Each House should develop a joint infrastructure based on cooperation between the member organizations of the House, with the aim of working towards these goals:

- to gather non-governmental organizations, which promote the objects listed in Article 3, to create a professional environment,
- to reduce the costs of administration for each organization and thereby use the extra resources directly on projects,

- to enlarge the scope of activity for each organization in the House,
- to assist the organizations to be more effective and professional by sharing experience, network, skills and knowledge across the borders of organizations in the same location,
- to assist the organizations in fundraising,
- to improve administrative skills and organizational capacity of the organizations in the House.

Article 5

Conditions of Network Membership

The conditions to be a member of the Network are defined by the Network members.

The member House must be a democratic organization consisting of non-profit and non-governmental organizations and initiatives that promote human rights and civil society.

The member organizations in the House are independent, and each member House in the Network is independent.

The financial activities and reports of the particular House and its organizations must be transparent.

Article 6

Members of the Network

New members and associated members of the Network are accepted by the Board of the Human Rights House Foundation together with all the individual House members of the Network by simple majority vote. Membership terminates on the request by the individual House or by 2/3 majority of those present at the annual meeting.

From October 1999, the members are:

The Norwegian Human Rights House - established 1989, member 1994

Moscow Research Center for Human Rights - established 1992, member 1994

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Warsaw - established 1989, member 1994

The Human Rights House of Sarajevo - established 1998, member 1998

The Egil Rafto House for Human Rights, Bergen, established 1999, member 1999

Organizations in the process of developing a House can be an associated member of the network. As of October 1999, there is one associated member:

The Albanian Center for Human Rights, established 1994, associated member 1995

Article 7

Financing of the Network

The Human Rights House Foundation covers the running costs of its secretariat in Oslo, which also coordinates the international network.

The secretariat may assist each individual member House in their efforts to provide funding for administrative costs and common projects, provided each House forwards the reports required for this purpose.

Article 8

Activities of the Network

The activities of the Network are decided by its members. Long term plans and strategies are decided by the annual meeting of the Network members.

The network should focus on the following joint activities:

8.1 Internship

The internship exchange program aims at improving the abilities of the local Houses staff, sharing experience and knowledge, improving mutual understanding, and deepening the work on joint projects.

8.2 Fundraising

The Network secretariat shall coordinate common network fundraising to cover the administration costs of the Network secretariat, member Houses of the Network and joint activities.

8.3 Information

8.3.1 The Houses in the Network desire more information from each other, primarily about ongoing activities and experiences of the member organizations. This information shall be made available through a newsletter.

8.3.2 The Network shall have a Home Page on Internet where information about the network and member Houses is presented.

8.3.3 The secretariat shall produce and distribute general information material about the Network for the purposes of fundraising and promotion of the Network.

8.4 Workshops for education

The Network shall arrange workshops primarily for its members and associated members. However, other interested parties working in the same field may also participate.

8.4.1 The workshops shall focus on education in human rights.

8.4.2 The workshops shall focus on management of human rights NGOs.

8.4.3 The workshops shall focus on technical aspects of monitoring and promotion.

Article 9

Management of the Network

The secretariat of the Network is located in Oslo in the Norwegian Human Rights House, and is run by the Human Rights House Foundation.

The secretariat will operate under the responsibility and the supervision of the board of the Human Rights House Foundation and report to the Network at the annual meeting.

Article 10

Meetings of the Network

A meeting of the members and associates of the Network is preferably held once a year.

Article 11

Activity Reports, Annual Program and Budget

The Network secretariat shall receive a short activity report from any joint bi- or multilateral project in the Network for keeping in the network file.

The Network secretariat shall present an annual report on joint network activities, draft annual program and budget to the annual network meeting.

Article 12

Entry into Force, Changes

This agreement came into force after the annual meeting in Oslo in September 1995, upon signature, and was amended in November 1998 and October 1999. Any change in the agreement can only be made upon approval of the members of the Network and the Human Rights House Foundation.

Signed,

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