

25TH

ORGANISED BY



EU-NGO FORUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS

4-5 DECEMBER 2023

Egmont Palace, 8bis Place du Petit Sablon
1000 - Brussels



Monday 4 December 2023

8:00 – 8:45 Registration and Welcome Coffee

9:00 – 9:30 Opening Speeches by

- › Věra Jourová, European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency
- › Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights
- › Hadja Lahbib, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions
- › Gina Wharton, EU Civic Space Policy Advisor, Oxfam International, on behalf of the Human Rights and Democracy Network

9:30 – 10:30 Interactive opening Panel: “Youth as Actors of Change”

- › Nada Al Nashif, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
- › Nana Millers, Executive Director, Trans Youth Initiative – Uganda
- › Mariia Sulialina, Head of the Center of Civic Education “Almenda”, Ukraine
- › Asala Mansour, International Advocacy Associate – ADALAH, The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
- › Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights

Moderators: Samantha Chaitkin (*Human Rights Officer, European Commission – INTPA G1*) and Venus Aves (*Member of the UN Human Rights 75 Youth Advisory Group*)

Location: Arenberg room – EN, FR, ES

10:30 – 11:00 BREAK

11:00 – 12:30 Building the right future – Foresight Session – Part I

The key aim of these two sessions is to envision the next two decades of human rights efforts, bringing divergent and convergent ideas together using strategic foresight tools. Each of the two sessions will be organized in breakout groups.

The first session will focus on identifying current trends, challenges and potential turns that human rights topics are taking. The second session (on Day 2) aims at discussing the results of the first session, extracting the relevant information, in order to draw concrete ways to envision a future around human rights.

The specific outcome of these sessions will be recommendations and actions that can be taken by CSOs, the EU or the UN.

- Location:**
- ▶ Group 1 to 2 – Blue room
 - ▶ Group 3 – Salon Voltaire
 - ▶ Group 4 to 7 – Orange room
 - ▶ Group 8 to 13 – Sax room

12:30 – 13:00 Group picture

13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH

14:00 – 15:30 Parallel sessions: **Protecting and strengthening the environment for human rights work: focus on Human Rights Defenders**

- Group 1: Democracy and Rule of Law – Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)
- Group 2: Environment and Climate Justice – Salon Voltaire (EN)
- Group 3: Gender and LGBTIQ+ – Sax Room (EN)
- Group 4: Freedom of Expression, Media and Digital – Orange room (EN, FR, ES)
- Group 5: Conflict and Peace – Blue Room (EN, FR, ES)

Participants will focus on the specific barriers and threats that young human rights defenders face and their subsequent protection needs. We will zoom in on what young activists can do to support each other in staying safe, and what partners can do to support young activists. This will be done while looking at intersectionality of vulnerabilities and particular thematic issues. The participants will identify how current national and regional protection policies and frameworks can fill the current safety gaps.

15:30 – 16:00 Keynote speech by **Josep Borrell**, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Commission Vice-President

Location: Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)

16:00 – 17:30 Plenary session: **“Protecting and strengthening the environment for human rights work – focus on human rights defenders”**

- › **Belen Martinez Carbonell**, Managing Director of the Global Directorate at the European External Action Service
- › **Hannah Neumann**, Member of the European Parliament and vice Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights
- › **Chiara Adamo**, Head of Unit of the Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance at DG INTPA at the European Commission
- › **Orsolya Toth**, Political Advisor to UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Mary Lawlor
- › **Erisa Dervishaj**, Secretary of Respect our Rights, Kosovo
- › **Petra Strader**, Programme Quality Support Director at Save the Children Sweden
- › **Braulio José Abarca Aguilar**, Coordinator of the Education and Historical Memory Program of the Human Rights Collective “Nicaragua Never Again”

Moderator: Mae Ocampo (*Executive Director, Protection International*)

Location: Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)

Through a conversation with UN and EU representatives, young human rights defenders and activists will identify how the EU can adapt some of its tools to enhance the protection of children and youth defending human rights.

17:30 **Closing of day 1**

18:00 – 20.30 Cultural event and Networking Cocktail

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Tuesday 5 December 2023

8:00 Welcome Coffee

9:00 – 9:30 Opening: Youth Participation and Promotion of Human Rights

- › Erica Gerretsen, Director for Human Development, Migration, Governance & Peace, DG INTPA, European Commission
- › Stella Ronner-Grubačić, EU ambassador for Gender and Diversity and Deputy Managing Director for Global Affairs, European External Action Service
- › Natalia Gomez, Special Advisor on Youth to the European Commission

The opening will introduce the participants to the session's concepts of participation and human rights promotion as well as related EU policies.

Location: Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)

9:30 – 11:00 Parallel sessions: Youth participation and promotion of human rights

- Group 1: Democracy and Rule of Law – Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)
- Group 2: Environment and Climate Justice – Blue room (EN, FR, ES)
- Group 3: Gender and LGBTIQ+ – Sax Room (EN)
- Group 4: Freedom of Expression, Media and Digital – Orange room (EN, FR, ES)
- Group 5: Conflict and Peace – Salon Voltaire (EN)

Participants will gather in five thematic groups and focus on the specific instruments they use to promote human rights and what support they need to increase participation in their human rights work. The guiding questions will cover navigating restricted civic space, youth-friendly partnership modalities, the use of new and traditional media tools, and transnational collaboration. Each thematic working group will identify what can be done better across these aspects.

11:00 – 11:30 BREAK

11:30 – 13:00 Parallel sessions: Regional dynamics and trends – discussion between Human Rights Defenders and EU representatives

- Sub-Saharan – Arenberg room (EN,FR)
- Asia Pacific – Sax room (EN)
- The Americas – Orange room (EN, ES)
- Middle East and North Africa – Blue room (EN,FR)
- Eastern Europe Africa and Central Asia – Salon Voltaire (EN)

The participants in this session will be divided into different geographical regions, where they will analyze how they can increase their participation in shaping public policies and how public authorities and regional human rights mechanisms can support their work. They will also discuss how they perceive the EU's role in the specific region. The participants will first have a chance to exchange among themselves and then to discuss their findings with EU representatives. EU representatives will present the EU human rights priorities in each region and will listen to first-hand policy recommendations from human rights defenders.

13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH

14:00 – 15:15 Building the right future – Foresight Session – Part II

- Location:**
- ▶ Group 1 to 2 – Blue room
 - ▶ Group 3 – Salon Voltaire
 - ▶ Group 4 to 7 – Orange room
 - ▶ Group 8 to 13 – Sax room

15:15 – 15:30 BREAK

15:30 – 17:00 Workshops and information sessions

- Session 1: EU Human Rights Defenders protection policies and mechanisms – Blue room (EN, FR, ES)
- Session 2: EU funding cycles, rules and trends – Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)
- Session 3: Advocacy towards the EU – Salon Voltaire (EN)
- Session 4: Celebrating Tomorrow: Youth Civic Engagement Explored – Stories, Insights, and Inspiration – Orange room (EN, FR, ES)
- Session 5: Facing digital threats and disinformation – Sax Room (EN)

17:00 – 18:00 Closing Session

- › **Ellis Mathews**, Head of the Human Rights Division at the European External Action Service
- › **Chiara Adamo**, Head of Unit of the Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance at DG INTPA at the European Commission
- › **Emma Achilli**, EU Adviser, International Dalit Solidarity Network, on behalf of the Human Rights and Democracy Network

Moderator: Samantha Chaitkin (*Human Rights Officer, European Commission – INTPA G1*)

Location: Arenberg room (EN, FR, ES)

Rapporteurs from the different sessions will share and discuss recommendations with the Human Rights and Democracy Network and EU policy makers.

Side Event

18:30 – 21.00 Cine-ONU event to mark the international day of Human Rights

(optional event organised by OHCHR [at Flagey](#) – Place Sainte-Croix 1, 1050 Brussels transfer available for registered participants).