

Dedicated EU projects

Alongside this political framework, the EU has committed €16 million to supporting human rights defenders for the period 2007-2010 via the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Since 2008, the EIDHR is co-financing 11 projects with NGOs specialised in the support and protection of human rights defenders. Two examples:

The EU helps journalists at risk, especially after reporting on human rights abuses, by providing:

- ▶ helmets and bullet proof jackets
- ▶ financial, health and legal support
- ▶ a rapid response hotline
- ▶ help in seeking refuge if forced into exile

The EU is building a safer environment for human rights defenders by:

- ▶ supporting 8 protection desks on 4 continents
- ▶ giving training in risk analysis
- ▶ publishing research and best practices
- ▶ establishing a parliamentary network
- ▶ following-up on individual cases

More Information

ec.europa.eu / external_relations/human_rights/europeaid/what/universal-issues/human-rights

**Supporting
Human Rights
Defenders
around the world**

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
External Relations



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European Commission
Directorate-General
for External Relations
B-1049 Brussels

Europe Direct
+ 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
(toll-free in the EU)

“Everyone has the right,
individually and in association
with others, to promote and
to strive for the protection
and realisation of human rights
and fundamental freedoms
at the national and
international levels”

(Article 1, UN Declaration
on Human Rights Defenders, 1998)

Who are *human rights defenders*?

Andrei Sakharov and Aung San Suu Kyi are two examples of dedicated human rights defenders.

But behind the scenes, many others are working without protection or recognition to expose and condemn human rights abuses worldwide.

They often represent silent victims, peacefully advocating respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

In practice, this means that human rights defenders for instance campaign for people's rights to freedom of expression, assembly and movement, as well as respect for labour rights, access to land and right to food. Often using the media, they are active in support of vulnerable groups, such as women and children, minorities, refugees and indigenous people.

Multilateral Support

Through the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the international community has shown its firm commitment to protecting and supporting human rights. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on 9 December 1998, reminds states of their legal obligations and commitments to promote and protect human rights defenders. However, too many countries worldwide still see human rights defenders as a threat to national security and interests.

The EU gives political and financial support to human rights defenders, closely following the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

According to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the EU Council in 2004 and revised in December, 2008, EU missions in third countries are called to closely monitor the situation of human rights defenders, especially women human rights defenders. The guidelines invite, inter alia, EU missions to:

- ▶ prepare local strategies for supporting human rights defenders
- ▶ hold dedicated annual meetings with human rights defenders and their organisations
- ▶ visit human rights defenders in custody
- ▶ provide recognition to human rights defenders
- ▶ give concrete support to human rights defenders, including emergency help, shelter or visas

