**High-Level Conference on the “Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights, our shared responsibility”.**

**Brussels**

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**Presentation by Professor Alan Miller**

**Chair, European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)**

On behalf of ENNHRI I would like to thank the Belgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe for the invitation and hospitality. I am very pleased that national human rights institutions (NHRIs) have been able to continue to participate in these High-Level Conferences since Interlaken.

I am even more pleased to witness the shift of emphasis of member states from scrutiny, sometimes disproportionate, of the workings of the Court and to focus increasingly on the national implementation of the Convention.

Yesterday I was struck by the comment from the First Vice-President of the European Commission that “the ECHR is not a thing of the past but of the future”.

I am sure that we all agree with that but it was worth emphasising.

This is not simply a technical or efficiency issue but is about preventing human rights violations. The future depends on what we all do in these times in which we live. The ECHR is very much something for the present in facing today’s challenges and preventing violations.

Such challenges include extremist violence and terrorism and how member states and all of us respond, including to Islamaphobia. They include forced migration from such humanitarian catastrophes as Syria and elsewhere in that region and how member states and all of us respond. They also include austerity and how member states and all of us respond.

The President of the Court stated yesterday that we all need to bring “shared responsibility” to life. I could not agree more.

It is not only the Court but how member states and all of us respond in implementing the ECHR that will shape our future and how we will be judged by future generations.

It is for all of us to ensure through our actions today that the ECHR is a thing of the future.

Member states are of course the primary duty-bearers and have a solemn obligation to implement the ECHR but it is also a shared responsibility for civil society and NHRIs.

The benefits of NHRI involvement in the Brussels Declaration Action Plan should be seized upon by all member states.

For example,

NHRIs offer much expertise in human rights education and training which can be a valuable supplement to state efforts to promote the awareness and understanding of the ECHR by legal professionals, state agents, members of parliaments, civil society organisations and the general public.

Through monitoring the human rights situation in their jurisdictions, investigations, review of legislation and policy and in liaison with civil society organisations NHRIs identify structural and systemic concerns which can impede the full implementation of the ECHR.

Action plans for execution of judgements may be drafted and implemented in consultation with NHRIs.

Active NHRI involvement in the supervision of execution of judgements by the Committee of Ministers can enhance that process and help remedy violations.

To take advantage of all of these contributions I call upon member states to strengthen their existing NHRIs and to establish them where not yet done so.

I welcome the commitment yesterday from the Belgian Chairmanship to establish an “A” status NHRI in Belgium.

In conclusion, on behalf of ENNHRI I assure you that we will continue to work together with all of you to make the Convention and the realisation of all human rights throughout Europe ever more effective in these challenging times.

Thank you.