

Paris, 14 June 2017

2017 HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Dear Sir or Madam,

Applications are now open for the 2017 “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” Human Rights Prize of the French Republic, awarded by the Prime Minister of the French Government.

This Prize, which was set up in 1988, is awarded in recognition and support for the completion of individual or collective projects carried out in the field, in France or abroad, regardless of nationality or borders, and linked to one of two possible themes.

1 - Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individual candidates, regardless of nationality and borders, should present a field initiative or project to be implemented in France or abroad, on one of the two themes for 2017:

- **Theme 1: freedom of information, freedom of the press and journalism**

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” Freedom of information and freedom of the press are essential corollaries of freedom of opinion and expression and pillars of democratic society founded on pluralism, tolerance and open-mindedness. As such, free journalism is a prerequisite for the protection and promotion of all other human rights.

However, breaches of these fundamental freedoms are many and take diverse and very serious forms: censorship, arrests, prosecution, threats, forced disappearances, and attacks on the lives of men and women. France, which considers that these are some of the most precious human rights, suffered such a tragedy with the attack on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015.

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Winning projects, actions and programmes will aim to ensure respect and promotion of freedom of information, freedom of the press and the independence of media and journalist, regardless of their nature and in all mediums, be they written, radio, multimedia or online blogs, in the face of political power, economic power, conflicts of interests and pressures of any sort.

They may also include programmes for training of public communication, or actions to promote these freedoms and journalism through all mediums.

Measures to defend or protect individuals threatened, censored or arrested and their families (legal, social assistance, etc.) for their journalism may also be selected, as may actions to protect and strengthen rules on the safety and independence of journalists and whistle-blowers.

NGO actions may also seek to raise international public awareness, so as to measure the scale of breaches of freedom of information and freedom of the press, or aimed at encouraging the exercise of these freedoms and action to ensure their respect.

- **Theme 2: promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive rights**

Access to sexual and reproductive health services is vital for decent living conditions in which individuals can thrive and live in good health. It is also a crucial lever for women's empowerment and gender equality. Guaranteeing the availability of health services and the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights has a direct positive impact on the health of women and girls, on access to education and employment, on financial independence and, more generally, on socio-economic development.

Rights relating to sexuality, pregnancy, childbirth and maternity have long been anchored in international law. In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt, confirmed that sexual and reproductive rights were human rights and affirmed that the principles of gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women were key factors in strategies relating to population and development.

Major progress has since been made to implement the commitments made, and sexual and reproductive rights are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda: target 3.7, under SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), requires universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, while target 5.6, under SDG 5 (Gender Equality), requires guaranteed universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

However, more than 20 years after the adoption of the ICPD Programme of Action, progress appears to have been variable, slow, and particularly insufficient regarding sexual rights and reproductive health.

In several places worldwide, women and girls cannot decide their own sexuality, are victims of sexual violence, and cannot determine the number of pregnancies they wish to have or their spacing. Moreover, pregnant women, those about to give birth, and young mothers often have insufficient access to health-care services.

Projects to assist or support women and girls in order to allow them to enjoy the best state of sexual health possible, enabling them for example to access sexual and reproductive health services, may be candidates.

Projects could also involve actions aimed at developing sex education initiatives or information programmes on sexual and reproductive health, whatever the gender and sexual orientation and identity of the target audiences. Lastly, projects fostering the inclusion of sexual minorities and promoting everyone's right for respect for their physical integrity and the choice of their partner and sexual orientation could also be eligible.

2 - Five prize winners will be invited to Paris for the official ceremony. They will receive a medal and share a total sum of €70,000, awarded by the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights.

Five runners-up will be awarded a "special mention" medal by the French ambassador in their country of origin.

3 - Applications must comply with the prize regulations.

The prize regulations are available upon request. They can also be found on the CNCDH website: <http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/prix/prix-des-droits-de-lhomme> .

4 - The application must be written in French and include:

a) A letter of application presented and signed by the president or legal representative of the NGO concerned, or by the individual candidate.

b) The application form, which is attached to this call for applications and can be downloaded from the CNCDH website: <http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/prix/prix-des-droits-de-lhomme>.

This form presents the project objective and means of operation in detail. A precise budget must be given (preferably with equivalent values given in euros).

c) A presentation of the NGO concerned (statutes, operations, etc.).

d) The postal address and bank details of the NGO or the individual candidate.

Candidates must submit their complete application, **before the deadline of 15 October 2017**, to the Secretariat-General of the CNCDH:

– 35, rue Saint-Dominique – 75007 Paris – France

– or by email to: cncdh@cncdh.pm.gouv.fr

Once the panel has announced the results, the 2017 Prize will be awarded in Paris by the Prime Minister, around 10 December 2017.

Please **circulate this call for applications widely**.

Yours faithfully,

Magali Lafourcade