

National Human Rights Institution

There is no national action plan on human rights in Iceland and no national human rights institution (NHRI).

Following the recommendations made by member states under the review of Iceland at the 26th UPR session, the Icelandic government entered into a voluntary commitment as to consider establishing a NHRI. Recently, an inter-ministerial working group was established with a main task to define which assignments, now carried out by the Administration, could fall under the scope of a NHRI. Unfortunately, some of these assignments are underfinanced and there seems to be no intention to increase the financial contribution a NHRI should it be established and the assignments put under its scope.

ICEHR has assumed the functions of a national human rights institution as set out in the UN Paris principles, though its powers, independence and financing are not established by law.

The Icelandic government is encouraged to establish a NHRI as soon as possible and to make use of the expertise, experience, know-how and network of ICEHR for this purpose as well as to ensure adequate finances for the institution to carry out its tasks.

Trafficking in human beings

Currently there is no action plan against trafficking in human beings in place but in March 2019, the Ministry of Justice issued the government's *Emphasis on Actions to Combat Human Trafficking and Other Forms of Exploitation*.

A positive step has been taken with the establishment of a coordination team run by the reception center Bjarkahlíð for victims of violence and the helpline 112 for trafficking notifications, but further action is needed. A steering group on human trafficking was appointed by the government, bringing together voices from the government, civil society organizations and the labor market unions.

Three task forces were created from the steering group and they made good recommendations to the government on actions to combat human trafficking. The Icelandic government has started the implementation of these recommendations and is currently working on actions against trafficking which include identification of victims, both adults and children. This material will be widely disseminated and available on the Ministry of Justice website. Plans and material for awareness raising are also being developed, for example educational material for supervisors and union representatives but also for the public. Plans are in place for awareness raising on exploitation of labour, corporate liability and chain/subcontracting liability. The government has also stated that it intends to instigate research into the trafficking situation in Iceland.

The Icelandic government is encouraged to adequately fund all actions for combating human trafficking and to issue a comprehensive action plan on trafficking in human beings. Special emphasis should be put on awareness raising and preventive measures.