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FOLLOW-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Information submitted by the French National Human Rights Consultative Commission¹

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Human Rights Council has received the following communication,² which is reproduced below in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, Rule 7 (b), which states that “Participation of national human rights institutions shall be based on arrangements and practices agreed upon by the Commission on Human Rights, including resolution 2005/74 of 20 April 2005.”

¹ The submitting National Human Rights Institution has “A status” accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

² Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission and in English only.

Annex

FRENCH NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION

Information paper

(8 February 2008)

With a view to the examination of France in the context of the universal periodic review, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will find below a brief description of the French National Human Rights Consultative Commission (CNCDH).

Status

1. The National Human Rights Consultative Commission is a national human rights institution (NHRI), which was recently accredited, once more, by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights as complying with the Paris Principles.^a Its responsibilities, composition and methods of operation are governed by Act No. 2007-292 of 5 March 2007 and Decree No. 2007-1137 of 26 July 2007.

Composition

2. The members of the Commission are appointed for three years, and divided into several categories: representatives of non-governmental organizations working in the areas of human rights, international humanitarian law or humanitarian action, and trade union confederations; persons chosen for their acknowledged competence in the field of human rights, including persons serving as independent experts on international human rights bodies; a deputy in the French Parliament, a senator and the National Ombudsman.

3. Government representatives take part in the Commission's work with the right to speak in an advisory capacity.

Terms of reference

4. The role of the Commission is to act as watchdog, make proposals, undertake follow-up and raise awareness in relation to all human-rights and international-humanitarian-law questions, vis-à-vis the French Government, Parliament and citizens. It is involved both ahead of the Government's work in the preparation of draft legislation, policies and programmes, and subsequently, ensuring the effective observance of human rights in practice. It acts on the basis of a referral from the Prime Minister and members of the Government or on its own initiative, and publishes its opinions and studies.

^a Principles relating to the status of national institutions, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 48/134 (20 December 1993).

5. The Commission is also involved in the preparation of reports that France submits to international organizations and in the follow-up to recommendations made by those bodies. Its opinions inform the stance taken by France in multilateral negotiations concerning human rights issues.

Work

6. The work of the Commission is prepared in subcommittees, then adopted in a plenary assembly. This work takes the form of opinions, studies or reports, which are available on the website www.cncdh.fr, and concern the effectiveness of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, in the interests of universality and indivisibility.

7. Furthermore, the Commission is required under the Act of 13 July 1990^b to submit to the Government an annual report on action to combat racism.

8. Lastly, it attaches particular importance to human rights education and training.

International activities

9. The Commission belongs to the international network and European Group of National Human Rights Institutions, and acts as the general secretariat for the Association francophone des Commissions nationales des droits de l'Homme. It thus works in close cooperation with its foreign counterparts and with various international organizations, in particular the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the International Organization of la Francophonie.

10. Each year it awards the Human Rights Prize of the French Republic, which rewards grass-roots activities for the effective protection and promotion of human rights, irrespective of nationality or country.

^b Act No. 90-615 making it an offence to commit any racist, anti-Semitic or xenophobic act.