

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

No. 307 – MF/KLR

Paris, 18 June 2015

2015 HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Dear Sir or Madam,

The French Republic's 2015 "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" Human Rights Prize, awarded by the Prime Minister of the French Government, is now open for applications.

This prize, created in 1988, is awarded for individual or collective action on the ground, irrespective of nationality or borders, undertaken in France or abroad, with respect to one of two themes, as chosen.

1 – Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), regardless of nationality and borders, should present an action carried out in the field or an implemented project, in France or abroad, on one of the two themes for 2015:

- **Theme 1: The dangers of Internet for human rights**

The Internet is seen as a haven for individual freedom of speech of individuals as well as of collective mobilization and campaigning, free of any established order or hierarchy. But it is also an ideal space for surveillance, where each and every little thing we do, each of our wishes and opinions, can be observed by governments and private companies unbeknownst to us. The potential of new means of communication can thus be used to further suppress, monitor or submit; while they can also, on the contrary, be powerful tools to promote human rights. Yet that dual nature in no way implies a true dichotomy. The path ahead is difficult and challenges are considerable, but nothing says we must choose between freedom and security. We need to govern without encroaching upon the privacy and secrets of our citizens' confidentiality and, while so much may encourage us to do so, we do not have to make technology the instrument of our submission, or to accept it as such.

Winning projects could involve on concrete actions on the ground to promote Internet access for the most disadvantaged, or projects highlighting the dangers and risks of mass surveillance. Prizes may also be awarded for projects enabling human rights defenders to protect their data, or projects aimed at the development and training of bloggers.

- **Theme 2: The environment and human rights**

Linking human rights and environment is a central issue in the contemporary world. Many international organisations have worked to promote this aim. Their primary objective is not merely to protect human rights in the conventional manner, by focussing on a specific human right or a specific aspect of human existence, but rather to restore and justify the link between human rights and the environment, while examining the rich array of rights that need to be reviewed through the new prism of environmental protection, which has an impact on human rights.

Winning projects may involve concrete actions on the ground aimed at promoting the issue of human rights obligations to ensure people enjoy a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Prizes may also be awarded for advocacy aimed at supporting and enhancing the framing of environmental policies, particularly as regards environmental protection, or projects promoted by local communities aimed at combating plans for deforestation or extractive industries that undermine the possibilities for communities to enjoy their rights in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

2 – Five laureates will share the overall prize of €70,000 allotted by the Prime Minister.

A “special mention” will be conferred on the five runners-up. Applications must comply with the prize regulations.

The prize regulations are available upon request, and can also be found online at: www.cncdh.fr

3 –The application must be written in French and include:

- a) a letter of application presented and signed by the president or legal manager of the NGO concerned;
- b) a dossier presenting the goal and description of the operation or project submitted, in detail. It must include a precise budget (with an equivalent sum preferably in euros);
- c) a presentation of the NGO concerned (statutes, operations, etc.);
- d) the postal address and bank details of the NGO.

Candidates must send their complete application without fail, **before the final date of receipt on 24 September 2015**, to the Commission’s Secretariat (*Secrétariat-Général de la Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’Homme*, 35 rue Saint-Dominique, Paris 75007, France).

or by email to: michel.forst@cncdh.pm.gouv.fr AND cncdh@cncdh.pm.gouv.fr

4 –Following the announcement of the results by the jury, the 2015 Prize will be presented by the Prime Minister in a formal ceremony in Paris around 10 December 2015.

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

Yours faithfully,