

# Mapping of temporary shelter initiatives for Human Rights Defenders in danger in and outside the EU

Final Report

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### 3 Policy context

This section presents the global and EU policy context in relation to HRDs.

#### 3.1 Global policy background

The United Nations Declaration on HRDs<sup>2</sup> adopted in December 1998 remains the key international instrument for the protection of HRDs. The Declaration states that State parties to the Declaration have a duty to protect HRDs against violence, retaliation and intimidation as a consequence of their human rights work. The duty to protect is not limited to actions by State bodies and officials but extends to actions of non-State actors, including corporations, 'fundamentalist' groups and other private individuals. While it sets out a political commitment upon State parties, as a Declaration it is not legally binding and its provisions are often breached. Moreover, HRDs continue to live in distress, as they are targeted and at risk of persecution by States or non-state actors. There is a need to enhance the evolving protection mechanisms for HRDs at both international and regional levels. In 2000 the UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs was established<sup>3</sup> with the mandate to investigate individual cases and closely monitor the situation of HRDs around the world. Furthermore, the Rapporteur also urges States to implement the Declaration on HRDs and human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Several mechanisms of protection for HRDs also exist at regional inter-governmental level. In 2001 a Human Rights Defenders Unit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was set up, while a special Mandate of the Special Rapporteur of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was established in 2004. The EU set out its Guidelines in 2004, which were further reviewed in 2008. In Member States of the Council of Europe HRD cases can be brought before the European Court of Human Rights or to the attention of the Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>4</sup>; both of these also have a HRD Mandate.<sup>5</sup> The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the recently created ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission of Human Rights are other examples of regional inter-governmental bodies which monitors the human rights situation in its participating States.

#### 3.2 The EU policy background

Human rights and protection of HRDs are an integral part of the EU's external relations policy<sup>6</sup>. The EU human rights policy framework is founded on the key principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, in keeping with fundamental principles enshrined in the 'Bill of rights' (the UDHR, 1948; the ICCPR, 1966; and the ICESCR, 1966). Moreover, EU policies in support of democracy and human rights in third countries have been articulated and developed in Commission Communications, European Parliament Resolutions and Council Conclusions over the years, including through specific EU Guidelines on human rights issues<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*.

<sup>3</sup> Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/61.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/HRD/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/HRD/default_en.asp).

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/HRD/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/HRD/default_en.asp).

<sup>6</sup> European Parliament resolution of 17 June 2010 on EU policies of human rights defenders (2009/2199(INI)).

<sup>7</sup> Guidelines to EU policy towards third countries on the death penalty, June 1998 (updated in 2008); Guidelines to EU policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, April 2001 (updated in 2008); EU Guidelines on children and armed conflict, December 2003 (updated in 2008); EU Guidelines on human rights defenders, June 2004 (updated in 2008); EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with

When it comes to the protection of HRDs, the EU Guidelines on HRDs of June 2004, updated in 2008, are specially designed to provide assistance to the embassies and consulates of Member States of the Union and the delegations of the EU to third countries in their policies relating to human rights, including HRDs monitoring. They provide guidance to EU diplomats on how to provide practical support to HRDs in third countries. The EU definition of HRDs is based on the UN Declaration on HRDs – Article 3 of the EU Guidelines defines HRDs as '*...individuals, groups and organs of society that promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms ...*' While the definition of HRDs used in the guidelines is broad, it excludes those individuals or groups who commit or propagate violence or those who seek to destroy the rights of others. Similar to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the EU Guidelines are not legally binding, yet they represent a strong political commitment for EU Member States.

The European Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM) Task Force on HRDs keeps the EU Guidelines under review. COHOM may consider possible EU actions where HRDs are at immediate or serious risk.

The EU's political commitment to promote the work of HRDs is completed by the financial support it provides under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) created by the EP and the Council in December 2006 and is managed by the EC. The EIDHR allows financial support to be provided for activities aiming to strengthen democracy and human rights around the world. While the EIDHR is global in scope and supports actions carried out in third countries throughout the world, actions in Member States may also be supported if they are relevant to needs in third countries.

The EIDHR Strategy Paper identifies within its objective 3 the support to human rights defenders and allocates approximately EUR 40 million to this objective for the period 2007-2013 to provide urgent protection and support to human rights defenders, particularly to those at risk, and to reinforce their capacities to do their work in the short and long-term.

CSOs, public and private sector non-profit organisations, national, regional and international parliamentary bodies; international and regional inter-governmental organisations and, in some cases, natural persons are eligible for EIDHR funding.

Finally, the European Parliament plays a key role in the support of HRDs' work and protection, especially in third countries, through diplomacy and during hearings at the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Human Rights, whose role is to ensure that the EU Guidelines on HRDs are implemented and to deepen cooperation with European institutions, as well as with international partners, such as the UN and its Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe and NGOs.

## 4 Main findings

This section presents the main findings and examples of the shelter initiatives mapping. The findings focus on mapping programmes implemented in EU Member States as well as a number of shelter programmes outside the EU, focusing on lessons learnt and best practices. A breakdown of the global, regional and EU shelter / temporary relocation programmes are included in Annexes 4, 5 and 6.

### 4.1 Mapping of existing shelter initiatives, programmes and actions

It is evident from the mapping exercise (Annexes 4, 5 and 6) that shelter initiatives in EU Member States and elsewhere are diverse in nature and target different groups of HRDs. These initiatives are mostly run and implemented by international or regional human rights NGOs which are often part of global or regional networks (Annex 4). Shelter initiatives often rely on international and regional human rights CSOs and local partners to provide a variety of protection support mechanisms (often pro bono) to HRDs in need of temporary shelter and/or other assistance. Some of these initiatives assist with funding for housing, others with visa or legal assistance, medical assistance, psycho-social counselling or with cultural orientation and social networking (Annexes 4 and 5).

Many of the international human rights NGOs engaged with monitoring HRDs in the field prioritise preventive responses or other responses to HRDs before shelter. For example, Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), freeDimensional, Front Line Defenders, the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT or Protection International will only support temporary relocation outside an HRD's home country or sub-region as a very last resort (Annex 4).

#### 4.1.1 Diversity in the types of shelter initiatives, programmes and actions and roles of different stakeholders

This section presents the key types of shelter programmes (emergency grants and relief programmes, fellowship programmes, government and city shelter programmes and guest or host initiatives). These are key types and examples (Annexes 4 and 5) and do not constitute an exhaustive list.

##### Emergency grants and relief programmes

Globally and across the EU, shelters are offered by NGOs through an emergency grant or relief protection mechanism (Annexes 4 and 5). In most scenarios such a mechanism is also used for other responses to protect HRDs, such as for security measures provision and legal, medical or material assistance.

When it comes to emergency and relief grants for temporary relocation, the HRD's own country or sub-region is prioritised for relocation. Only if that is not possible will HRDs be relocated to locations further afield, such as the EU (Annex 4). This is due to many factors, including the frequent wish of HRDs to remain in or close to their home countries, and the 'do no harm' principle to support HRDs in the region as drivers of change. As is evident from several key informants and HRDs, many face stigmatisation and cultural and language barriers when relocated temporarily to a distant country, often without their dependents. Moreover, the costs of assisting and relocating HRDs in their country or sub-region are significantly lower (whether in a flat or a safe house) than relocating them to an EU Member State (sub-section 4.1.8).

Therefore, the first response by NGOs and NGO coalition networks – such as Amnesty International, members of the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)<sup>8</sup>, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE), the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP), FIDH, Freedom House, freeDimensional, Front Line Defenders, Human Rights Watch (HRW), MADRE, OMCT, Protection International, Reporters without Borders (RWB) and the Urgent Action Fund (UAF) – is to support HRDs in their country or region of origin through grants and a wide range of responses, such as improving the security of HRDs homes by installing a barbed wire or surveillance camera; providing legal, medical or psycho-social assistance; and facilitating temporary relocation to a safe house. Several of these NGOs provide this kind of emergency support and relief grants for temporary relocation under EIDHR-funded projects or under ad-hoc small grants provided under the EIDHR emergency facility for HRDs at risk.

For example, Freedom House, which has offices around the world, does not have a shelter programme in the US but instead works through an emergency funding mechanism. Since its birth, Freedom House has assisted close to 700 HRDs in 66 countries with medical care, legal support, prison visits, equipment replacement, support for dependents, and, in the most extreme circumstances, temporary relocation. As another example, UAF has established a very effective rapid response mechanism available for women HRDs (WHRDs) in need of protection in their country or sub-region. An application can be submitted to the UAF in any language, and the UAF is able to respond to a request within 72 hours. Similarly, the organisation MADRE can provide emergency financial assistance for shelter for WHRDs and give support to their family in their country or sub-region.

Another example is the organisation freeDimensional, which provides temporary shelter for three to six months within artist residency apartments. Through its Creative Resistance Fund, it provides small distress grants to artists in danger. FreeDimensional is forming local coalitions of NGOs and CSOs ('triage' teams) to work with HRDs and artists in distress (Annex 9). The aim of these coalitions is to identify case consultants who will be able to assess the needs of HRDs in the country or sub-region and establish the best durable solution and support needed, whether short- or long-term.

#### Fellowship programmes

In several EU Member States (**Ireland, France, United Kingdom, Netherlands**), universities play a central role by offering fellowships and thus temporary shelter to HRDs and scholars at risk. A great number of such fellowships are run by international NGOs (often US networks with hubs in Europe and elsewhere) which usually allow for temporary shelter on or off campus, ranging from six months to two years. These include the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) hosted by New York University, the Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF) of the Institute of International Education in the US, the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) at the UK's York University, Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA) in the UK, the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Programme run by the National Endowment for Democracy in the US and the Foundation for Refugee Studies in the Netherlands.

Most of the EU fellowship programmes are hosted SAR or SRF partners. However, the CAHR at the University of York runs its own fellowship programme and hosts HRDs-at-risks who follow training and education programmes and contribute to the activities of the centre. The programme allows the HRDs to rest and seeks to build their capacity and give them tools they can use upon their return

In the US, temporary shelters are mostly run by scholars-at-risk organisations, consisting of the SAR Network and the SRF based in New York. Both organisations have established networks with universities around the world that are interested in hosting scholars-at-risk (with

<sup>8</sup> AWID recently published a report of the 'Urgent Responses for WHRDs at Risk: Mapping and Preliminary Assessment', June 2011.

broadly defined categories of practitioners or scholars) for a short-term period (between six months and a year). The SAR Network, for example, provides fellowships/shelter to scholars-at-risk in 250 academic institutions in 32 different countries. SAR assists scholars, broadly defined, which is interpreted to include practitioners who have published articles and are facing threats in their country of origin. Their profiles and needs are matched with partner institutions offering temporary positions around the world. When safe return is not possible SAR staff work with scholars to identify opportunities to continue their work abroad.

Generally speaking, the SAR serves more of a networking function, whilst the SRF, as part of the Institute for International Education (and Fulbright Program sponsor), provides the funding component. Usually, but not always, the two organisations work together to place a bona fide scholar-at-risk for up to a two-year period of time. It is interesting to note that many of their university host partners are in HRDs' sub-regions<sup>9</sup>. Some US universities, such as Harvard University, have their own Scholars at Risk programme; and the John S. Knight Fellowships hosted by Stanford University and the Niemen Fellowships at Harvard play an important role in hosting journalists-at-risk.

Another example of an US programme providing temporary shelter for HRDs is the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow Program at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington. This short-term (five to seven months) programme allows for approximately five HRDs (with broadly defined categories of practitioners or scholars) to join a fellowship programme every year and receive extended visas, extra language training and professional development support, along with access to psycho-social counselling, if necessary. The programme provides a monthly stipend, basic health insurance, research support, as well as the reimbursement of travel costs related to the programme. While in residence, fellows undertake independent research, develop their international networks and understanding of democracy development, and identify their 'next steps'.

As highlighted by SAR, SRF, and CAHR, the benefits provided by fellowship programmes to HRDs range from offering the opportunity for individuals to acquire new skills, to allowing time to recuperate and reflect upon their human rights work in order to return to their human rights activism with renewed energy and ideas. Enhancing the capacity and skills of HRDs is a sustainable way of bringing about social change in their home countries. The host universities or programmes, fellow students, and the host country may all benefit from the HRD's experience through and the sharing of knowledge and best practices in human rights activism.

#### Central, regional and local government involvement in shelter programmes

##### *Central government involvement*

In EU Member States such as **Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden**, central governments take an active role in providing shelter initiatives for HRDs at risk<sup>10</sup>. Outside the EU, **Norway** takes a leading role in providing city shelters to HRDs at risk and on HRD issues in general.

In the **Czech Republic, Ireland and the Netherlands**, governments have established accelerated entry admission procedures for HRDs who are issued a Schengen visa for a three-month stay, which is expedited on 'emergency / humanitarian grounds' for HRDs in need of rest and respite.

**Spain** has the longest-running HRD state programme, which has operated since 1999 and is open to all categories of HRDs. It is open to all nationalities, although it originally targeted only HRDs from Colombia and is now, in practice, mainly being used for HRDs from Latin America.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.scholarrescuefund.org/pages/our-partners/host-institutions.php>.

<sup>10</sup> Other Members States such as Austria, Finland, Germany, Slovenia and the UK gives priority to HRD issues in general.

Identification is usually undertaken by NGOs in the field, state actors or HRDs themselves who approach an embassy. The embassy provides 'clearance' of referred cases before they are submitted through the use of a secure channel to the Office of Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to referring a case to the embassy for clearance, the Office of Human Rights consults the Regional Desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Once a final decision has been made, the consular affairs unit will ask the embassy to issue a 'residence permit for exceptional circumstances' which excludes entitlement to work and has a maximum validity of 12 months (although the permit can be extended for another 12 months if the HRD is unable to return to his/her country due to continued high risk). The average time from referral to issue of the visa is approximately one month, although some cases may take longer time.

In **Ireland**, the humanitarian visa scheme provides a fast-track approach that can sometimes mobilise HRDs within a few days to travel to Ireland for a short-term stay of up to three months. All HRDs who have travelled to Ireland on this scheme have done so with the support of Front Line Defenders (Annexes 4 and 5), a beneficiary of the EIDHR programme. An application is submitted to the Irish Embassy or consular representation in the applicant's country. If there is no representation in the country concerned it must be submitted to a neighbouring country, exceptionally to the Human Rights Unit at the Irish MFA. The visa application must include supporting documentation such as a letter from Front Line.

In the case of **Denmark**, the Aliens Act was amended recently<sup>11</sup> to introduce a clause allowing writers-at-risk to stay up to two years with the possibility of extension by another two years. Currently it is limited to this target group but it has been debated whether it may be expanded to other categories such as artists<sup>12</sup>.

Outside the EU, in the **US** the US State Department oversees individual HRDs and provides funding to several international NGOs which target scholars, broad categories of HRDs and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) HRDs, mostly through assistance in the HRD's country and/or sub-region through confidential protection mechanisms<sup>13</sup>. In **Canada** there is no specific temporary shelter programme for HRDs, however Canada is strongly engaged in supporting HRDs in their country and sub-region. Moreover, Canada's immigration laws are sufficiently flexible to allow for the issue of temporary and permanent resident visas to HRDs based on humanitarian and compassionate consideration<sup>14</sup>. In some cases, a visa can be issued on an urgent basis to allow for relocation within a matter of days. These procedures are most often used to facilitate the resettlement of Convention refugees who are in urgent need of protection, but they can also be used to facilitate the relocation of non-refugees, such as HRDs.

#### *Regional government involvement*

In EU Member States such as **Italy** and **Spain**, regions and autonomous governments are also very involved, having their own shelter programmes. In Italy, the region of Tuscany has for decades had a strong regional ownership of its shelter programme which today forms part of the ICORNs programme. In Spain, the autonomous government of Catalonia in Barcelona co-funds programmes such as ICORN. Similarly, the autonomous government of Asturias has its own programme, which exclusively target Colombians and the autonomous government of the Basque country is currently starting a new programme.

<sup>11</sup> Amendment to the Danish Aliens Act, 484 of June 17<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with the Danish Ministry of Culture, August 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Consultations with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, US State Department, Washington DC, July 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Consultations with the Policy Advisor of the Human Rights and Governance Policy Division, Foreign Affairs, and the Director of Refugee Resettlement at Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, July 2011.



### *Shelter city and local government involvement*

At the EU level, shelter city initiatives are prominent (see Annex 5). The most structured existing city shelter initiative and network in the EU today is ICORN, which was founded in 2006 and has since grown steadily to 40 host cities today, each offering shelters to writers-at-risk (broadly defined). Currently, there are ICORN cities in **Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy**, the **Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden** and the **UK** as well as in many cities outside the EU. The ICORN administration centre in Stavanger, Norway, works closely with PEN International and its Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) before suggesting a HRD for city shelter. WiPC is contracted by the ICORN administration centre to assess and clear individual applications.

As stressed by many key informants, some of the key advantages of the ICORN city shelter programme lie in the selection procedure and the involvement of WiPC and PEN Centres<sup>15</sup>. The PEN Centres in the EU Member States also assist in providing writers with a cultural network, and advise cities on how best to employ the writers. In some instances, the PEN Centre is the immediate administrator of the city shelter programme (as in **Spain**).

An equally important strength lies in the strong ownership of the region or city and the local authorities. ICORN cities such as Frederiksberg in **Denmark** emphasise that they can make a difference in promoting global freedom of speech; they actively engage in cultural exchange with other HRDs and writers and support them by publishing their work in local newspapers in Denmark. Barcelona in **Spain** is also strongly engaged in international cooperation and remains in close cultural dialogue with the writers during their stay and upon their return, so that they become 'goodwill ambassadors' for Barcelona.

The city needs to fulfil a number of requirements to host writers-at-risk (Annex 10 provides an example of a standard agreement between ICORN and a region/city which lists each party's duties and obligations). However, it is evident from ICORN's city shelter programmes that engagement varies greatly between cities. Sometimes cities merely provide assistance in terms of making a flat available and providing subsistence allowances (**Belgium, Poland, Slovenia, Spain**). In such Member States, the cities prefer to delegate this role to a PEN Centre. In other EU Member States (**Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden** and in **Norway**), the cities designate a city coordinator who engages the HRDs in the local civil society community and assists with practical issues, such as medical assistance, schooling etc. In **Italy**, a region of Tuscany has entered into an agreement with ICORN.

One of the key challenges stressed by ICORN's administration centre is locating the *best match* for the HRD and the region/city, a win-win situation.

One of the less measurable, but very important aspects of running shelter programmes, which is stressed by Amnesty, ICORN and fellowship programmes, is the 'payback' the host gains from inviting and hosting a HRD. ICORN cities strive for win-win-situations, and numerous cities report of success stories. For examples, writers contribute directly in literary events and public discussions. ICORN cities such as Barcelona, Copenhagen, Krakow and Reykjavik capitalise from connecting values associated to the shelter city status (human rights, hospitality, international solidarity, intercultural dialogue etc.) to the overall branding and marketing strategies of the cities.

Outside the EU, while countries such as the **US** and **Canada** do not have a similar network of shelter cities, a few organisations run shelter city initiatives, namely the City of Asylum in Pittsburgh, the Ithaca City of Asylum in New York and the Miami City of Refuge programme (an ICORN partnership). The City of Asylum project in Pittsburgh assists writers-at-risk by providing, over two years, a furnished house, medical cover and help in transitioning to

<sup>15</sup> PEN International, founded in 1921, is today viewed as a leading voice of literature documenting and investigating cases of writers under attack. PEN operates on all five continents with 144 PEN Centres in 102 countries.

potentially permanent exile. Miami hosts a writer for two years at a time and provides a furnished flat for a guest writer and his/her family. Miami also facilitates the acquisition of legal stay (visa and residence permit) and provides a grant of approximately EUR 1,000-1,500 a month for a writer, in addition to health care and public schooling facilities, should the writer come with minor dependents. In Canada, PEN Canada's Writers in Exile Network has sheltered many writers through university fellowships and, on occasion, in cities (Owen Sound and Toronto). As regards the Canadian programme, though, it should be noted that such shelter programmes are for writers who have already resettled in Canada and who may already have long-term residence status and even be recognised refugees.

#### *Guest / host initiatives*

A few coalition networks, such as freeDimensional and its Triage team, also explore guest / host initiatives for artists-in-distress. As an example, the Wooloo network<sup>16</sup> connects the resources of more than 22,000 cultural producers in 150 countries. In December 2009, the group sheltered 3,000 activists in the homes of private families during the UN climate change summit in Copenhagen. Wooloo is currently working on a global shelter programme to facilitate guest/host exchanges between Copenhagen, and several other cities around the world. The programme aims to bring foreigners to Denmark for 'visits with a purpose' and sets conditions for further exchange, in which the roles of guest and host are reversed. Potential hosts are assigned to a project on an ongoing basis via an open call. Interested applicants hear about the project via articles, other media coverage, through friends or online. To become a host, the applicant must be willing to give shelter to a person in need for a minimum of one week. All hosting must be free of charge. Some hosts are only willing to host a single guest, while others sign up to host entire families. Wooloo has also established a network of 'Super Hosts' who are willing to host for longer periods for time. To become a Super Host, a host must have hosted at least once before in the Wooloo Exchange network and be screened via a personal interview with a Wooloo representative. Guest(s) are to be given a private room, as well as internet access (95 per cent of all Wooloo hosts (normal + super) have internet access). For guests needing to stay even longer, the Wooloo Exchange programme provides for rotations among Super Hosts. The Wooloo Exchange programme is funded via public and private grants. The Wooloo network sees clear opportunities to expand this guest/host model to include HRDs.

#### 4.1.2 Categories of HRDs and cultural ties

Since most existing EU and non-EU shelter initiatives are mostly run by NGOs, they have specific mandates focusing on areas such as freedom of expression or women's rights. They generally focus on their own target groups: journalists and media workers (RWB), writers (ICORN, PEN), scholars (SRF, SAR, the foundations for refugee students, CARA), or women human rights activists (AWID, MADRE, UAF). The Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People offers five shelters a year in Hamburg city which are open to broad categories of HRDs. However, by far, globally and within the EU, temporary relocation initiatives are mostly offered for writers, journalists and scholars-at-risk (ANNEX 4). This constitutes a key comparable constraint for other categories of HRDs and activists in need of shelter.

Similarly, programmes are affected by political or historic ties. In **Spain**, for example, most hosted HRDs come from Latin America. The **US** has hosted an increasing number of Iraqi scholars, and the SRF has set up a special fund to assist Iraqi scholars exclusively. In the **UK**, CARA has set up special programmes for Zimbabwe and Iraq.

However, a number of shelter initiatives in **Ireland** (Front Line), **Spain** (various), **France** (AEDH), and new initiatives in the **Czech Republic** and the **Netherlands** (Respite), the latter

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.wooloo.org>.

expected to commence in 2012, are open to all categories of HRDs, as derived from the UN definition (Annex 5).

#### 4.1.3 Overall need and magnitude of HRDs in need of shelter

In the current volatile global political context, there is a pressing need to support HRDs in and outside their home country, in order that they can continue their struggle for democratisation and freedom of speech. The Arab spring and the two HRD shelter examples in the box below, show how changes often are driven by individuals and HRDs in and outside their country.

### The role of temporary shelter in the Arab Spring

The plight of Tunisian journalist and WHRD's Sihem Bensedrine was monitored by PEN International, Amnesty International and other organisations, who sent out alerts and wrote appeals for years before she temporarily sought exile in Europe. Sihem Bensedrine and her husband had been hosted by other organisations and safe houses in Europe for a while when ICORN was informed that they could not return to Tunisia, and their visas were expiring. Barcelona, an ICORN city member, offered to host them in March 2010. In Barcelona, Sihem Bensedrine was able to continue her efforts to promote democracy and human rights in Tunisia. When not in Barcelona editing web magazines, communicating with major forces inside and outside Tunisia via phone, e-mail and Skype, she was travelling extensively to Brussels, New York and other places, for meetings and conferences on democracy and freedom of expression. As the Arab revolutions started to unfold early in 2010, her activities intensified, and as soon as it was reasonably safe for them to return to Tunisia, she and her husband left their temporary safe haven in Barcelona for her to become one of the leading voices during the Arab spring in Tunisia.

Only a few days after his marriage, Mansur Rajih, a renowned poet and political activist from Yemen, was imprisoned and sentenced to death on false charges. After 15 years' imprisonment, he was released in 1998, following campaigns by Amnesty International, PEN International and the international donor community. Upon his release he went directly to Stavanger, Norway, a shelter city for persecuted writers at that time run by the International Parliament of Writers from Paris. Reunited with his wife, a long period of mental and physical recovery started far from home. In 1999 he steadily began to resume his career as a poet and activities as an HRD once again. By now bilingual in Arabic and Norwegian, his poetry (including poems secretly written in prison) was published and he started publishing comprehensively in the Arabic news media, inside and outside Yemen. Still blocked from returning home, the Arab Spring posed a huge source of hope and inspiration for him. He now extended and intensified his dialogue with freedom fighters inside Yemen. Well known among his countrymen, his voice frequently addressed thousands of protesters on the squares of Sanaa and other Yemeni cities, shouting on the phone from his city shelter in Stavanger, accompanied by a photo portrait of him, projected on the city walls. In 2011, he met the Yemeni Nobel Peace Prize winner and WHRD Tawakkul Karmen in Oslo who, in the course of her human rights work, had been inspired by Mansur and his poetry.

This mapping demonstrates that HRDs relocated to EU Member States are relatively few in number (Annex 5). Most commonly, a Member State may only admit less than a handful of HRDs a year. The estimated number of HRDs given shelter per year in the EU today is approximately 200, with the majority being sheltered through fellowships (Annex 5). In the EU, **Spain** and the **UK** host the highest numbers of HRDs. **Spain** is willing to host and issue special HRDs visa for some 30 HRDs a year, of which 5-10 will be hosted under its own financial scheme and others through Amnesty International, regional (Catalonia, Asturias, the Basque regions) and city shelter programmes (Barcelona and Palma de Mallorca) for temporary stay between one to two years. In the **UK**, most HRDs are relocated through one of the many fellowship programmes run by NGOs (CAHR, CARA, SAR, SRF) and universities and are thus admitted through the more regular scholar / student residence permit, which is usually the pattern for most scholars-at-risk admitted for a fellowship into an EU Member State.

The majority of key informants interviewed emphasised that the demand is higher than indicated by these numbers and that the numbers of admitted HRDs would be higher if the supply structures, places and funding were available. Other reasons for the low numbers of HRDs effectively sheltered in Europe include the low awareness among HRDs of existing shelter programmes (many initiatives often deliberately take a very discrete approach when it comes to raising awareness); the priority given to other types of 'response' such as preventive measures and local actions<sup>17</sup>; the weakness in existing mechanisms/procedures for identifying HRDs in need of this support; as well as the varying selection / admission criteria and thresholds set by governments, NGOs, cities and/or host universities.

As an example, despite the fact that a steadily growing number of cities choose to become ICORN cities, ICORN currently has a waiting list of about 40 identified, screened and approved HRDs. Some of these are living in hiding with urgent protection needs, and some have been waiting for shelter since 2006. The WiPC list of imprisoned, detained and targeted writers-at-risk, of which many would benefit from shelter, is well documented and consists of thousands of writers a year<sup>18</sup>.

Trends in terms of the nationalities of HRDs are observed and documented by networks such as the SRF<sup>19</sup>, SAR and CARA. In response, SRF and CARA have set up programmes for persecuted Iraqi academics due to the increase in applications as well as the high quality of Iraqi scholars' research.

#### 4.1.4 Identification procedures

Most global shelter initiatives rely on a network of partners who form coalitions, and they often work closely with local human rights NGOs (Annex 4). The human rights NGOs, in particular, monitor the situation of HRDs in the field in their daily work and are thus able to proactively identify the need for urgent temporary relocation.

A number of shelter initiatives (ICORN, SAR, SRF) also rely on individual applications. However, if used on their own, individual applications could have an inherent weakness in being restricted to particular circles of HRDs such as the well-educated or HRDs who are independently able to find out about existing shelter programmes. Thus, this could lead to a somewhat 'elitist' approach. More vulnerable HRDs may not be aware of the existence of shelter programmes. They may not have an internet connection, language skills or other types of knowledge necessary to fill in a lengthy application form.

In most cases identification comes about through a mixture of identification channels ranging from individual and urgent appeals to referrals, internal nominating partners (international and credible local grass-root partners), external referrals from the human rights community, academic community, relief agencies, the media, or from an HRD's colleague or other individuals.

The international human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International, FIDH, Front Line Defenders, PEN International, Protection International and RWB have clear comparative advantages in that they are proactively able to identify HRDs in most need of temporary relocation through their daily work in the field and with the assistance of local partner organisations.

As an example, Front Line Defenders Protection Coordinators in Dublin are in close contact with HRDs and local human rights organisations. The Protection Coordinators monitor the

<sup>17</sup> These for instance include providing legal, medical and psychosocial assistance, safe houses, security training, alarm systems and other emergency assistance measures.

<sup>18</sup> The Writers in Prison Committee's (WiPC) half-yearly case list of 2011.

<sup>19</sup> 'Scholar Rescue in the Modern World' by Dr. Henry G. Jarecki and Daniela Zane Kaisth, Institute of International Education, New York, 2009.

HRD cases and verify with contacts on the ground that the HRD shelter candidate is actively working in non-violent human rights work and is at risk. Front Line Defenders request the HRD to identify a desired, feasible location and to arrange logistics. Once a case is identified they may issue an 'Emergency Appeal' to an Irish embassy where the HRD is located and the Embassy personnel may also meet with the HRD in question. The donor country's local support is found to be helpful, particularly when it comes to expediting the case and issuing a visa.

FreeDimensional, which might not be perceived as a classic human rights NGO, works with artists-in-distress, and thus HRDs throughout the world, and has recently launched a best practice model for identification, needs assessment and best-match referral (Annex 9). After a pilot phase, freeDimensional and its coalition partners are now rolling out the triage team processing model in all continents.

#### 4.1.5 Visa and entry procedures

Overall, the NGOs and key informants interviewed echoed the view that understanding and establishing procedures with immigration authorities is essential when HRDs are in need of urgent relocation. In this respect, Front Line Defenders has recently published a guide on the Schengen visa procedure that includes tips for HRDs and for anyone who wants to better understand the Schengen visa procedure.<sup>20</sup> The document provides useful tips based on past experiences by HRDs and international human rights organisations, with a view to helping speed up the visa delivery process.

As stressed by several of the shelter organisations, thorough preparation of the 'case' before referral to a shelter programme is vital for a speedy process.

The fast-track procedure first established by **Ireland** and now by the **Czech Republic** and the **Netherlands** is an interesting example of expedited procedures for the issue of a short-term three-month emergency visa for HRDs. **Spain** and **Denmark** have also established special admissions procedures for HRDs.

Following the contested re-election of the Iranian president in June 2009, EU Member States such as **France** and **Germany** provided emergency visas and material assistance with the support of RWB to a number of targeted journalists, many of whom were forced to apply for asylum due to their perceived political views. In **France**, for example, more than 30 'emergency' visas have been issued for Iranian HRDs and their families since November 2009. It should be noted, however, that these journalists, who had at first sought temporary 'refuge' in the sub-region through a campaign started by RWB, including under their EIDHR-funded project, were invited to France on 'emergency' or 'humanitarian' visas with the subsequent intention to apply for asylum<sup>21</sup>.

#### 4.1.6 Average time of relocation procedures

While there is a general concern about the constraints of the average processing time of getting a visa posing great risks to HRDs, there are some positive examples of fast-track procedures, including amongst some EU Member States.

If the risk to the HRD is short-term in nature, the model implemented by the **Czech Republic**, **Ireland** and the **Netherlands** can offer a quick solution to bringing the HRD into the country within weeks. In **Ireland**, the turnaround of an emergency visa can be just a few days, although it can also take up to 30 days.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/fl\\_schengen\\_visa\\_guidelines\\_0.pdf](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/fl_schengen_visa_guidelines_0.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> RWB interview, September 2011 and 'RWB Support for exiled Iranian journalists'.

The **Netherlands** also supports organisations in the field, such as the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, which provides support including shelter to HRD-at-risk in their country/sub-region within days. This enables the HRD to continue travelling back and forth to his/her country of origin while in temporary exile.

Again, freeDimensional and its Triage team provide another best practice model to learn from (Annex 9). Through its resource mapping, the network is able to relocate an HRD or artist-in-distress, often in the country or sub-region, within few days.

If the need to relocate a HRD is not extremely urgent, the process that can take a few months. For instance, in **Spain**, the average processing time from identification till arrival is normally about 2 months.

When a fast-track or 'emergency HRD' visa is not available it is important to understand other entry admission routes, such as visas and residence permits for study purposes. However, the average processing time for processing such visas varies greatly from country to country, including in the EU.

#### 4.1.7 Average duration of stay, legal status and asylum requests

The duration of stay and the acquisition of legal status vary greatly throughout the EU Member States as well as outside the EU, and can range from a three month 'Rest and Respite' visa to a two-year residence permit, often on student or scholar admission entry grounds.

Most EU Member States (and countries outside the EU) do not have special legislation in place for HRDs at risk and in need of urgent relocation. However, some countries have established special procedures allowing for the issue of a three-month visa through an accelerated procedure (**Ireland**, the **Netherlands**) or a temporary residence permit for HRDs (**Spain**) and writers-at-risk (**Denmark**). In the case of Denmark, this may be extended for up to four years in total.

While the ultimate goal of existing shelter initiatives are for HRDs to enjoy safe haven in the EU for a temporary stay and then return to their home countries, the existing picture indicates a risk that many HRDs end up 'relocation shopping' from programme to programme or being forced to apply for asylum or pursue other means of entry.

When it comes to short-term Rest and Respite, as under the Front Line Defenders programme, only about 5 per cent of HRDs apply for asylum. Asturias' city shelter programme for Columbians has a 100 per cent return rate. In general, the longer the initial stay, the higher the likelihood of staying in the host country over the long term or permanently. However, for short-term journalists at risk who are accepted under the Fojo shelter programme in **Sweden**, applications for asylum are much higher. Only two out of six HRDs returned to their home country after the 3 months Schengen visa stay. The reason for this is very simple, as many of the HRDs are unable to return to their country of origin after a stay of just three months due to the continuation of risk.

Some programmes such as Amnesty International's programme in **Spain**, which provides funds for one year but which provides for a stay of up to two years if extended by the government, mainly target individuals with high protection needs and therefore few options to return after the end of the programme since their life mostly continues to be at risk. Today, about 30-40 per cent of the HRDs stay in Spain.

When it comes to scholars and fellowships, the likelihood of staying in the host country after ending the scholarship is also high. Only about 34 per cent of the scholars hosted in Europe within the SRF network return after ending their fellowship, which usually lasts one year. SRF typically assesses return rates within a five-year post-fellowship window. A one- or two-year fellowship is most often not enough time for the conditions in a scholar's country of origin to

have improved for immediate return after the fellowship. Moreover, within a five-year window, most remain in their host country and some apply for asylum, though that is typically their least preferred option. Almost all HRDs express their desire to go home, yet they are often not able to return home due to their continued protection needs. Others who do not return home may return to their region. However, as the Executive Director of SAR stressed, their figures show that many move to a third country after the end of their stay, and the return picture is more nuanced as many scholars may, for years, move on to successive fellowships or to the region of origin before returning home, if they return home at all.

ICORN's city shelter programme also indicates that many end up not returning after a one- or two-year city shelter stay. Again the main reasons for this are legal protection needs. Although ICORN is not a refugee organisation, Norway grants ICORN the flexibility to shelter a writer with long-term protection needs in one of its Norwegian member cities.

All HRDs interviewed stressed that applying for asylum would only be a very last resort for them. The most prominent reason for not applying for asylum is the loss of the right to return and the ability to continue promoting human rights in their country of origin or region. They also fear that they may not be able to work in the field of human rights should they apply for asylum as they would then lose shelter support and be forced into other work in order to support themselves; and they may be stigmatised as an asylum seeker or refugee. Other considerations that may negatively affect an HRD's wish to apply for asylum include the perception that they would be abandoning their fellow HRDs in the fight for human rights in their country of origin; and concern for the family, which in most cases remains in their country of origin.

However, many HRDs feel that applying for asylum is the only alternative they have if they are to avoid being returned to their countries when the situation that made them leave in the first place has not fully disappeared. Across the board, shelter initiatives generally agree that the majority of HRDs have the greatest desire to return home following the end of the shelter programme if this is feasible, and they will often do so at great personal risk. Most want to continue the fight in a sustained way if possible.

Some HRDs stressed that, due to the short duration of available temporary relocation programmes, they had been forced to apply for asylum. For many HRDs and NGOs, the possibility of accessing a longer temporary scheme after having completed a short stay, or renewing it for a similar period of time, would be an alternative to applying for asylum.

Following their naturalisation and recognised refugee status, and end of the temporary relocation shelter programme, the withdrawal of financial shelter support often made it difficult for HRDs to continue their work promoting human rights and they were forced into other work areas, both illegal labour and often in low-skilled labour, outside their professional and academic areas of expertise<sup>22</sup>.

#### 4.1.8 Average costs of hosting an individual HRD

The average costs of shelter initiatives vary greatly globally and across the initiatives implemented in the EU Member States (Annex 6). The most economically advantageous solutions are clearly to be found in the country or sub-region of origin, where shelter is often provided through emergency relief grants of between EUR 5,000 and 10,000. (Annex 4 provides a list of examples of relief grants and shelter initiatives in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America).

Within the EU Member States, the lowest cost shelter programmes facilitated by governments and NGOs include the one carried out in the city of Brno by the **Czech Republic** in partnership with NGOs, where the total monthly costs are about EUR 1,500. The government

<sup>22</sup> Interviews with Human Rights Defenders in Spain and Switzerland.

financial scheme in **Spain** is also amongst one the lowest costs, at EUR 1,352 for a family a month and EUR 1,202 for HRDs on their own. This amount covers accommodation and subsistence. Public health and access to public schools are free. It does not, however, cover other costs including activities and administration costs incurred by the Office for Human Rights at the Spanish MFA. Any other support to HRDs during their stay is offered through NGOs out of their own funds or pro bono.

Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de L'Homme's (AEDH's) monthly relocation costs in the country or sub-region of the HRD would be around EUR 300-400 per month, compared to about EUR 1,500 per month in Lyon, **France** (where AEDH is based).

The shelter programme carried out by Amnesty International in **Spain** is also comparably cost-efficient. The annual costs of running the programme are only around EUR 100,000, originating from about 40 per cent autonomous region subsidies and 60 per cent of AI own funds. This covers e.g. visa support, initial start up expenses, psycho-social support, family support, housing, utilities, subsistence allowances and tailored support (training) for 5-10 HRDs and their family members a year. In addition to this, public health and access to education for children below 16 years of age is covered by the State.

Most of the NGOs rely on volunteer and *pro bono* services from a variety of partner organisations to complement the shelter support for HRDs in areas, such as visa support and legal assistance, psycho-social care and social networking.

When it comes to the ICORN city shelter programme, the monthly costs are about EUR 1,100 for a single HRD, EUR 1,300 for a couple and EUR 1,700 for a family (Annex 6). This, however, excludes all other costs such as transport costs to and from the Member State (EUR 1,000-2000), costs of activities during the stay (this varies greatly), costs for ICORN membership (EUR 2,000 annually) and costs for administration by the municipality or NGOs such as Pen.

ICORN's administration centre in Stavanger and the Danish Ministry of Culture both estimate that the total cost of hosting an HRD guest writer is about EUR 150,000 a year, i.e. about EUR 12,500 a month. This would include all actual costs including public health, education for children, targeted support and administrative and overhead costs for the local, regional or central government. The yearly overhead cost for running the ICORN administration is about EUR 500,000, which includes sub-contracting WiPC. Similar costs are anticipated for running the Dutch shelter city programme. With regard to the costs and estimated average time used for an ICORN region/city on HRD activities this varies from 20-50 per cent of a full-time position. In addition, there are administrative costs involved for government and PEN Centres which are difficult to measure.

The average costs of providing a fellowship grant at the CAHR in the **UK** vary greatly from the length of fellowship, availability of housing, and individual needs, such as external training needs. The administrative and overhead costs seem comparably cost-efficient (Annex 6).

Outside the EU, the average cost for a fellowship at the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellowship Programme in the **US** is approximately EUR 25,000 for a five-month stay, excluding overhead expenses for the National Endowment for Democracy<sup>23</sup>.

Types of financed activities under the shelter initiatives carried out by governments, regions, cities and NGOs also vary greatly. Some programmes have hardly any funding for further

<sup>23</sup> The average cost per HRD is US\$35,000 for a five-month stay including costs for visa support (US\$250-3,500), transport to and from the programme (US\$2,000), a basic health insurance (US\$550), a five-month stipend to cover food and living costs (US\$28,000), research support (US\$5,000 USD), project related travel (US\$800), presentation support (US\$800), computer and other skills training (US\$200) and phone and office supplies (US\$200). In addition, there could be costs for legal assistance which can range from US\$1,500-10,000 for a visa application if pro bono services are unavailable.



activities as compared to fellowship programmes, and some shelter initiatives may benefit from additional funding tailored to the individual need of the HRD (Annex 6). For example, the Spanish financial government programme does not provide any funding for activities or support in Spain. This is entirely up to the HRDs, who usually are assisted through a network of NGOs and pro bono services.

#### 4.1.9 Synergies and coordination among different shelter initiatives

All of the global shelter initiatives undertake some degree of coordination and participation in various coalition networks. However, the extent of coordination is often constrained by their individual mandates and the categories of HRDs they serve (Annex 4).

##### Coordination and networking

One interesting tool for coordination and networking is the Journalists in Distress listserv tool developed by the CJFE, CPJ and the Rory Peck Trust in London. It is a simple concept where international CSOs who are supporting writers and journalists-at-risk can share information and potentially raise funding for support including shelter<sup>24</sup>.

##### Sustainable organisational shelter city structure

In **Germany**, the City of Frankfurt has been running shelter programmes for persecuted writers since the late 1990s. Today, they form part of ICORN's network. In sharing the responsibility for the programme between an international literary organisation ([www.litprom.de](http://www.litprom.de)), the Frankfurt Book Fair and the municipality, Frankfurt can serve as a model for how one can achieve organisational, financial and professional sustainability for a shelter city. The programme has run since the 1990s and Frankfurt city and municipality has built a solid structure and competence together with Litprom and co-finances the programme through the Frankfurt Book Fair.

##### Awareness raising

In **Sweden**, a coalition of NGOs, the National Council of Culture, the Department of Immigration and the current four ICORN cities are working together to consolidate and further develop shelter city activities in Sweden. The City of Malmö recently developed a comprehensive promotion programme involving a diverse range of actors in the municipality<sup>25</sup>. The core element is the 'Express Yourself' exhibition that is scheduled to tour throughout Sweden, and then go international, providing public relations for the guest writers and the shelter city initiative as such.

##### Identification and referral

Shelter programmes are often weakest when they operate individual applications schemes as opposed to pro-active identification which monitors HRDs on ground through credible local partner organisations. Although FIDH does not have a shelter programme *per se* it is able to pro-actively identify HRDs in need of shelter through close to 200 local partners, and thereby support cases in need of shelter. CAHR has instituted a special procedure with some 30 credible 'nominating' partners to ensure effective identification and best matches.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.cpj.org/blog/2011/08/working-a-global-partnership-to-assist-journalists.php>.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.icorn.org/articles.php?var=299>

### Finding the best 'response' and best match

The freeDimensional 'triage' team process and resource mapping model (Annex 9) is an example of current best practice in terms of a building a coalition of international and local grassroots partners to ensure a rapid best response for an HRD at risk in or outside their region.

### Short-term temporary relocation

In **Ireland**, the humanitarian visa scheme of Frontline Defenders, the Irish MFA and Department of Justice presents a very interesting model, as the HRDs interviewed who have benefited from the programme have had the opportunity of rest and respite. Rest and respite provides time and space for HRDs to take some time out and recharge their batteries in a safe environment while at the same time enhancing their skills so that they can work more effectively when they return home. The average processing time from identification to arrival is comparably swift, the cooperation between the partners works well and the return rate for HRDs is close to 100 per cent.

### Long-term temporary relocation

In **Denmark**, the shelter city model coordinated by the Danish Ministry of Culture, the Danish Immigration Service and five cities may serve as another interesting example of a well coordinated and long-term relocation approach. The initiative came from NGOs (in particular Danish PEN). It is particular interesting as the Danish Aliens Act, as well as national laws related to culture, were amended and adjusted in line with the ICORN Charter and Statutes. Writers/HRDs move to shelter cities on a two-year temporary 'ICORN' residence permit.

### Admission and visa approaches

When fast-track or emergency visas are not available it is important to understand other entry admission avenues (visas and residence permits). In particular, the US-based shelter initiatives such as SAR and SRF have established good networks with pro bono lawyers, NGOs assisting HRDs and asylum seekers providing legal aid.

In the EU, organisations such as CAHR and ICORN apply similar entry admission schemes. CAHR and ICORN also appear to have been successful in speeding up the visa process by preparing the evidence for the case for the immigration authorities in a rigorous way (although the visa processing time can vary greatly from country to country).

### Support during stay

Amnesty International's Spanish section has, since the beginning of its shelter programme in 1998, enhanced its local network to tailor support to the individual needs of HRDs who may need legal aid and psycho-social care. This makes use of 'local volunteer groups' to assist the HRD in their daily lives through a 'cultural orientation' and to help them deal with new challenges without feeling isolated or alienated.

Fellowship networks such as SAR and SRF have built a massive network and experience in hosting scholars (broadly defined) and have partner organisations throughout the world. Based on years of lessons learnt, SAR has drafted a best practices guide<sup>26</sup> for its network members. Designating mentors or local community members to assist the scholar are among the methods which have proved to be successful.

<sup>26</sup> Scholars at risk Network - How to Host: A 'best practices' guide for Network members, latest edition 2011.

## Return and post-return

Some of the larger fellowship networks such as SAR and SRF seek to better understand the concept of return which is often seen as being fluid. Many HRDs are not able to return after a short stay and even after one or two years due to a continued high legal and physical protection risk. Others fellows may not return immediately as they have an opportunity to continue their research abroad at a university or may find a job. Some are forced into applying for asylum as this may be the only existing legal option following a temporary stay.

On a one- or two-year horizon, the number of 'returns' is low for many HRDs under ICORN, SAR and SRF city shelter or fellowship programmes (Annexes 4 and 5). For SAR this is to some extent to be expected: on a five- or eight-year horizon such programmes would expect returns to be much higher. However, when assessing rates of 'return', one must consider i) how long an HRD has been in exile; ii) if they have successfully moved from one location to another within exile; and iii) what both the subjective and objective assessment of likelihood of return is at the time of selection for assistance. Currently, returns data after a longer time spent in such shelter programmes is not available.

Preparing the HRDs for return and providing them with skills training for more sustained effects in bringing about medium- and long-term social change is an important element for the CAHR's short-term fellowship programmes in the **UK**. The CAHR also follows up with returned fellows/HRDs individually and through its partners who report back on their achievements post return<sup>27</sup>.

## 4.2 Political, legal and financial constraints of existing initiatives

### 4.2.1 Political constraints

In general there is strong political commitment across the Member States for supporting HRDs<sup>28</sup>. The EU institutions and various Member States in their foreign affairs policies (Finland and the Netherlands, for example) generally recognise the need to support individual HRDs as drivers of democratisation, rule of law and promotion of human rights in third countries. The political constraints in some Member States relate almost entirely to the issue of immigration and the 'fear' that the HRD shelter initiatives in the EU may lead to permanent stay. The consequence of this 'fear' is arguably that a number of Member States may only have programmes limited to a three-month Schengen visa.

Local authorities are generally interested in hosting HRDs-at-risk. As mentioned above, since 2006, ICORN has grown from 16 cities to 40 cities and is today the largest city shelter network with several new cities becoming members every year. However, despite this interest from cities, ICORN has a waiting list of about 40 identified, screened and approved HRDs. Some of these are living in hiding with urgent protection needs, and some have been waiting for shelter since 2006. The WiPC list of imprisoned, detained and targeted writers-at-risk, of which many would benefit from shelter, is well documented and consists of hundreds of writers a year.<sup>29</sup> This indicates some unmet demands.

However cities (including ICORN cities) and CSOs in **Denmark, Netherlands and Spain** express constraints when it comes to use of public funding (or the political justification for offering financial assistance through the local budget at a time when they are being asked to prioritise and cut spending). Central, regional and local authorities also said that the lack of knowledge of HRD needs and a lack of experience in practical implementation of such

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cahr/defenders/Success%20Stories.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with the Chair of COHOM.

<sup>29</sup> The Writers in Prison Committee's (WiPC) half-yearly case list of 2011.

programmes are constraints that can hamper engagement by cities. Some cities therefore chose to delegate the entire implementation and running of the programme to local NGOs.

#### 4.2.2 Legal constraints

In most EU Member States, HRDs' entry is often based on a student, a scholar, a researcher and/or on a fellowship grant/programme. To obtain a visa or residence permit on student, researcher or trainee grounds in an EU Member State, there are EU rules for entry and residence for students<sup>30</sup>. However, there are special conditions and requirements for different categories of third country nationals, their level of education, etc. It is therefore important to know the entry admission grounds and prepare robust cases. Obtaining such visas is relatively inexpensive for both the sponsoring organisation and the applicant and is a venue that deserves to be further explored by NGOs and other actors involved in temporary shelter support for HRDs.

Although there are also legal entry admission possibilities in Member States to invite the HRD's dependent family members, a main constraint is that many existing shelter programmes are *de facto* only open to individuals. This may be well reasoned in some cases and particularly with regard to short-term Rest and Respite cases. However, for longer stays this is often due to administrative and financial constraints.

As mentioned above, the **Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain** currently apply special legal admission procedures for HRDs. In the Czech Republic and the Netherlands a HRD can only stay for three months on a Schengen visa with the possibility of a further three-month extension. This is adequate for Rest and Respite only, but three months is insufficient for HRDs with urgent protection needs as it is unlikely that the situation in their home country will have improved after such a short time. When shelter needs are longer, yet temporary in nature, other legal means of entry, such as those offered by **Spain or Denmark**, are more suitable.

Due to the similar legal and physical protection needs which many HRDs share with recognised refugees, the existing legal framework and limited shelter supply structures are not always suitable for HRDs in need of shelter. As a consequence, many are relocated to other programmes and some are forced into applying for asylum. However, almost all HRDs who arrive for a short-term stay return to their country or sub-region after their stay.

The options for temporary shelter do not generally include refugee resettlement mechanisms through UNHCR. In **Norway**, however, an HRD (writer-at-risk under the ICORN programme) is recognised as a quota refugee within the Norwegian refugee resettlement scheme. This programme provides an opportunity for ICORN cases where return after a temporary stay is impossible or where ICORN and WiPC decide that a long-term solution and permanent residence would be the most durable solution for the applicant. However, although this model provides high level of legal protection for an HRD, the study shows that most HRDs do not wish to apply for asylum but, rather stay on a temporary basis allowing them to return to their country either temporarily or permanently. Furthermore, granting refugee status in Norway also has the effect that the HRD will have to complete the general refugee integration programme. This appears to be a weakness, as the HRD would benefit more from a tailored programme which would allow the continuation of his/her HRD activities. It would be more conducive for the HRD to focus their time on his/her human rights activities.

<sup>30</sup> Council Directive 2004/114 on the admission of students, pupils, trainees, and volunteers. The Directive should have been transposed in all Member States by 12 January 2007.

#### 4.2.3 Financial constraints

It is evident from the existing shelter initiatives across the EU, and globally, that available resources and placements are very limited (Annexes 4, 5 and 6). For example, ICORN city shelters are only open to one HRD (usually without a family) shelter for a one- or two-year period. The pattern is similar for fellowships, which are often only open for individual HRDs. Although there may be good reasons to focus only on one HRD at a time, several shelter initiatives and cities interviewed clearly stressed that they would be willing to accommodate families or additional HRDs if the funding were available. Furthermore, this represents a key constraint, as the consequences of living without their dependents or close relatives for a longer time may have psycho-social consequences for the HRDs. While the limited funds have contributed to the end of shelter initiatives that existed in the past, such as the one run by the autonomous government of Catalonia<sup>31</sup> that was open to all categories and nationalities of HRDs and that ceased to exist in 2011, many cities would be interested in hosting HRDs were financial funds available. In **Denmark** the five ICORN cities voiced concern over the limited availability of funding, with the result that the Ministry of Culture established a special government fund for municipalities hosting writers-at-risk under the ICORN programme. Leading NGOs such as PEN, Amnesty International, CPJE, freeDimensionai, Front Line Defenders, ICORN and SAR all emphasised the limited resources. Similarly, only few shelters have the resources to be adequately involved in following up on the success of the HRD in his/her re-integration efforts and activities post return.

Several CSOs take the view that these financial constraints could be lessened if there were enhanced network and coordination among existing initiatives. A single coordination entity could minimise the risk of duplication of efforts (HRD candidates often apply for many shelter initiatives at the same time) and help ensuring that CSOs limited financial and human resources are used in a most cost-efficient manner.

#### 4.2.4 Other constraints

A key constraint with the majority of shelters across EU Member States and globally is that they only apply for certain categories of HRDs, such as writers, journalists or scholars-at-risk (Annexes 4 and 5). This is understandable as organisations and initiatives work within their specific mandate and limited funding making only a number of places available. However, the consequences for the broader categories of the HRDs, the low profiles and vulnerable who may be difficult to reach can be fatal.

The cultural shock that relocation to a foreign country can have for HRDs is also a matter of concern for many NGOs and defenders. HRDs interviewed stressed that while they were thankful for the opportunity to obtain a safe haven in an unknown country, factors such as the separation from their family, being sheltered in a country where they do not speak the language and have a limited social network may have a huge impact of their psychological well-being. There may be many reasons for the difficulty existing programmes face in matching the needs of HRDs to the available places for shelter, including limited awareness of the range of available initiatives, limited funding, difficult and/or limited access to programmes, identification issues, visa obstacles and limited number of placements.

Finally, an even more worrying constraint is the insufficient time of the stay *vis-à-vis* the change in the situation of danger for the HRD at his/her place of origin. While a short-term stay only provides sufficient time for rest and respite, some HRDs de facto end up 'relocation shopping' through their nominated shelter providers or are forced to apply for asylum if the risk to their personal safety is still high if they return to their home country. As an example, three of ICORN's guest writers are currently unable to return to their home country. In Spain, a HRD sheltered under Amnesty International's programme stressed that HRDs in Spain have been

<sup>31</sup> The Program for the protection of Human Rights Defenders published by the Office for the Promotion of Peace and Human Rights.

'forced' into illegal employment and take up employment and thus are stigmatised and exploited after the expiration of their 1 year Amnesty grant. Many are issued a year-long extension of stay but are not allowed to work. Around 30-40% of the HRDs remain in Spain after the end of the shelter programme.

The box below demonstrates that there is relatively easy access for well-known activists, but a need to open up shelter programmes to broader categories of HRDs, such as WHRDs and activists working with LGBT, union rights and artists-in-distress.

### Need for shelter initiatives that target all categories of HRDs

A WHRD stressed that she was one out of hundreds of Iranian activists who was lucky enough to be admitted to a shelter programme and able to remain active in promoting women's human rights in Iran after she was forced to flee in 2009. She fled with her daughter via Turkey (visa free for Iranians) and was assisted from there by the Heinrich Böll Foundation which invited her to stay in Germany for six months where she continued her research on rape and sexual torture in prisons in Iran. She was later relocated to London with assistance from the Dutch Human Rights Tulip Award and support from Hivos and Justice4Iran.

Her friend, another WHRD, was interrogated frequently by Iranian authorities. She wanted to attend a conference in Paris. A two-week visa was issued but her Iranian passport was confiscated shortly before her flight so she remained in Iran. She would have liked to stay in France for three to six months to rest. Activists do not have the same protection as other categories of HRDs such as journalists, lawyers and writers. They therefore face hard migration regimes and are most often not able to continue their activities if they are forced to apply for asylum and live as refugees in a new country. The continuation of human rights activities is not only valuable for the defenders themselves but also for civil society in their country since he or she brings back new experience and skills. The fact that some defenders decide to ask for asylum at the end of their (temporary) stay should not affect the discussion about temporary shelter. You cannot blame the human rights defenders for the repressive situation in their country of origin. Human rights defenders are the civil society leaders<sup>32</sup>.

Another constraint arguably lies in identification, access (often through individual applications only, Annexes 4 and 5) and perhaps low awareness of shelter programmes. As most HRDs have protection needs similar to asylum seekers, they are often desperately seeking support following temporary relocation. If synergies, coordination and support mechanisms were enhanced, HRDs with long-term needs would be able to continue their human rights activities without being forced to apply for asylum.

### Lack of options forces HRDs to seek asylum

Sunanda Deshapriya, a journalist and HRD from Sri Lanka, was forced to leave the country because of increasing threats to his life in early 2009. He left for Chennai, India for two months and was supported by the Sri Lanka Safety Fund and international press freedom and media development organisations. When his visa expired he returned home in March 2009. As the threats against him continued, he fled again, this time for Nepal where it was possible as a Sri Lankan national to obtain a visa upon arrival. In mid May 2009 he returned to Sri Lanka and left for Geneva to attend a Human Rights Council special session on Sri Lanka. On 27 May 2009 he spoke at the council supporting an independent investigation into the alleged human rights violations that have taken place during the last phase of the civil war in Sri Lanka. After this intervention he was advised not to return to Sri Lanka as the state-controlled media had launched a propaganda campaign against him calling him a traitor to be eliminated. He received a scholarship from Front Line Defenders to stay in Geneva for six months, where he could continue his human rights work. At the end of 2009 the Swiss immigration authorities gave him five working days to leave the country for not fulfilling some work

<sup>32</sup> Dutch Shelter City Meeting, the Hague, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

related formalities although he had a visa. Facilitation by the Swiss mission at the Human Rights Council made it possible for him to stay. The World Organisation against Torture located in Geneva agreed to employ him for the year 2010. Meanwhile he kept sending applications to various shelter initiatives to find shelter or a scholarship for the year 2011. When his efforts failed, Sunanda Deshapriya was forced to apply for political asylum in Switzerland in November 2010 and was granted refugee status in June 2011. Sunanda Deshapriya regrets his decision to apply for asylum. He believes that HRDs should not seek to settle down permanently outside their country or sub-region if this can be avoided. They should try to go back to continue the struggle for human rights in their own countries. His family, two daughters and wife still live in Sri Lanka in the hope that their father and husband will be able to come back home sooner rather than later.

#### 4.3 Assessment of the need for a structured shelter network for HRDs in need of temporary relocation

The mapping shows that there while there are several initiatives to temporarily shelter HRDs in the EU and a few city shelters in the EU (mainly implemented by ICORN), the overall shelter supply structure EU is relatively small and represents fewer than 200 temporary shelters a year, all types included; thus not being able to meet the overall demand of HRD in need of temporary shelter. The most favourable, value for money and durable option is to support HRDs in their country or sub-region to continue to act as drivers of change fighting for human rights. Only when this is not possible should shelter in the EU be considered.

A need for a flexible response mechanism that ensures swift support and the *best match*

One shelter model may not fit all EU Member States or cities due to political, legal, financial and other constraints. A structured shelter network would provide the benefit of flexibility, allowing it to act swiftly, while at the same time striving to find the *best-fit, tailored* solution for the HRD and the host (government, region, city, NGO, university or other hosts). HRDs have very different needs, and before relocating an HRD to an EU Member State it is vital that the 'referral / nominating' bodies have carried out a thorough needs assessment of the HRD's short-term, medium-term or long-term needs and likelihood of return and then they should be referred to one of the many programmes in the EU run by civil society organisations, municipalities and/or governments.

There are various synergies which could be realised through the creation of a more structured EU shelter programme using a single platform or clearing house for HRDs which would nevertheless safeguard the pluralism of the various existing and new initiatives and be inclusive of the broad categories of HRDs. As is evident from the mapping, the majority of shelters currently in place across EU Member States and globally only apply for some categories of HRDs such as writers, journalists or scholars-at-risk. By establishing an EU shelter platform / coordination entity and secretariat, the *broader* HRD categories, which often do not meet the criteria of some of the current shelter initiatives to be accepted in their programmes, could be best-matched and relocated through a coordinated EU shelter network which would include global shelter initiatives. A platform which could build on the mapped programmes and which would be able to provide limited funding to programmes including shelter city programmes would clearly add value. The response capacity of the EU and the EIDHR, and their support to HRDs in need of shelter, would become more visible and holistic. Over time, a single mechanism or platform could become a centre of excellence in supporting HRDs globally by clearing cases of HRDs at risk in need of urgent relocation to a safe place, and ensuring the *best match* for their shelter – or facilitating an alternative response.

It would be cost-efficient to have one EU clearing house and coordination entity. Currently, shelter initiatives in the EU which have similar target groups have different resources and procedures when it comes to identification, needs assessment, eligibility criteria, support while in exile, and preparation and follow-up on return. This leads to duplication of efforts and

unnecessary time spent on shelter administration in the case of HRDs, who may try their luck through individual applications to several programmes. It may also lead to frustration amongst the HRDs who may end up on a shelter programme that might not necessarily be the best match for their specific needs, circumstances and professional background. It is important to note here that this lack of coordination is also dangerous in the sense that precious time is lost in getting the HRD out. It is dangerous because it may facilitate the return of someone who is still in danger. HRDs who need support may be left out of the programmes because NGOs or cities would rather have "easier" categories of HRDs sheltered, etc.

#### Coordination and exchanges of best practices

At EU level most of the global shelter initiatives participate in ad hoc coordination with organisations and networks that target similar categories of HRDs. They accept informal inquiries from other organisations at a global level and sometimes have formal agreements with local partner organisations and nominating partners (Annex 5).

Coordination among existing initiatives run by NGOs, cities and universities could be better ensured by an EU shelter initiative, which would also enhance synergies and the exchange and sharing of best practices and lessons learnt from sheltering different categories of HRDs. These exchanges could also allow for new cities and civil society organizations to join the shelter programme if the resources for this were to be made available. As mentioned above, SAR has drafted a best practice guide for its network members which may serve as a good model to learn from.

Coordination and networking are perceived by the shelter initiatives to be necessary and useful although several CSOs such as CPJE, SAR and SRF stress that the resources for coordination are very limited.

#### Resource mapping / Database

The shelter initiatives in the EU are often ad hoc, few in number and therefore often without a database. If effective coordination were enhanced through a common single platform / coordination entity with a secretariat, it would be valuable to build within it a global database system with comparable information on credible organisations which provide financial and *pro bono* assistance to HRDs at risk around the world. This database would be accessible to all those stakeholders willing to be part of the EU programme and would allow for an interactive exchange of information and action about cases of HRDs in need of urgent relocation and shelter.

Currently, some fellowship and shelter initiatives, such as the Reagan-Fascall Fellowship Program administered under NED, are seeking to develop a database of HRD assistance programmes to enhance cooperation. Another interesting network that has built a database is the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), a network and global clearing house for more than 80 CSOs which can provide emergency financial assistance (grants), including shelter for journalists at risk.



## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

This section draws together the overall conclusions of the study and suggests future options on i) how to improve synergies among existing and future programmes run by NGOs and cities and their partnerships; ii) ways in which the EU may contribute to overcoming the identified constraints of the actors running such programmes; and iii) the feasibility of setting up a structure and network of local cities and NGOs, to ensure a stable and coordinated response by the EU to the need for temporary shelter for HRDs, whether in the EU or outside the EU.

### 5.1 Conclusions

1. **Diversity** Shelter initiatives are tailored according to the different individual needs of HRDs and thus need to be flexible in order to provide a best-fit, tailored and comprehensive response. One shelter model may not fit all EU Member States due to political and legal needs and constraints and the varying involvement of governments, regions, cities, NGOs and universities. Most shelters are provided through fellowship and *ad hoc* relief grants, the latter often in the country of origin or sub-region. In the EU, the most structured city shelter model is the ICORN model (Annex 10).
2. **Shelter as a last resort** Support to HRDs in the country of origin or sub-region is the preferred option as the vast majority of HRDs wish to stay there if they can. This is a far more economical option and regarded by most human rights CSOs as more durable, given that HRDs wish to stay close to their activities if possible. However, not all sub-regions have readily available solutions for HRDs requiring relocation or safe haven.
3. **Magnitude and need** The current supply structure for shelter for HRDs across the EU Member States, whether these are city shelters, fellowships, NGO relief grants or government financial schemes, are limited and currently represent fewer than 200 temporary shelters a year in the entire EU 27. There are many examples of unmet demand (waiting lists).
4. **Categories of HRDs** Across the EU and at the global level, there are far more shelter programmes for writers-at-risk, journalists and scholars compared with shelters for other categories of HRDs such as WHRDs, artists and activists in general. This is an inherent weakness and shelter programmes targeting all categories of HRDs would add value.
5. **Identification, access and procedures** Across the EU, the identification and access to a shelter programme varies from individual applications to pro-active monitoring of HRDs in their country and sub-region. Getting a visa or a residence permit in an accelerated manner is a major challenge for many existing shelter programmes. There are interesting visa practices to learn from here in other Member States, such as Ireland.
6. **Admission and duration of stay** The duration of temporary relocation during the stay varies greatly, from three months to two years. Visas for short-term stays are mainly useful for HRDs who need Rest and Respite. For HRDs with urgent protection needs, a three-month visa is generally too short. Such HRDs have longer-term temporary needs, and require an entry permit with acquired rights and obligations to continue their activities while in exile.
7. **Rights and support during stay** Some shelter initiatives (e.g. fellowships, ICORN city shelter programmes) allow the HRD to carry out research or other work within their profession. Most current shelter initiatives in the EU are *de facto* only open to single HRDs, often due to administrative costs or in the case of short-term stays.
8. **Return** Generally speaking, the longer the HRD stays in a Member State or country far from their own country or sub-region, the greater the likelihood they will not return immediately after the end of the temporary stay, mostly due to their continued protection needs. However, the study also shows that some are forced into applying for asylum

although they prefer not to and the 'return' picture is more nuanced if continued relocation support is given or a new programme is identified. For the short-term Rest and Respite stayers, almost all return to their country or sub-region.

9. **Average costs** Globally and across the initiatives implemented in the EU Member States, the costs vary greatly. The costs for relocating an HRD to an EU city shelter programme or a fellowship are high. The total costs for hosting a HRD and his/her family in a city annually can come to EUR 150,000 (including all administrative costs). Emergency and relief grants and NGO shelters are often cheaper using a variety of pro bono services. Temporary relocation in the country or sub-region is by far the cheaper option.
10. **Synergies** There are several interesting examples of synergies to learn from with regard to, for instance, short-term and long-term stay, resource mapping and use of databases. The constraints in available resources and funding can lead to risk of duplication of efforts and poor practice.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the mapping, key findings and conclusions, the key recommendation is to set up a stable structure, such as an *EU HRD Platform/Coordination Entity and/or Programme*. The description and structure of the platform/programme, in the form of a secretariat, is provided in Annex 11.

The following summarises the added value that such a platform/coordination entity or programme could provide in terms of i) improving synergies among existing and future programmes run by NGOs, universities and cities and their partnerships; ii) ways in which the EU may contribute to overcoming identified constraints of the actors running such programmes; and iii) the feasibility of setting up a structure and network of local cities and NGOs to ensure a stable and coordinated response by the EU to the need to temporarily shelter HRDs at risk, whether in a EU Member State or outside the EU.

- By enhancing synergies, coordination efforts, and response mechanisms for HRDs, the EU can take a leading and strategic role in supporting HRDs as drivers of change and future human rights leaders in developing countries. Similarly, governments and cities which are part of the platform and/or programme will be able to 'label' their initiatives and utilise the platform strategically.
- An EU HRD platform and/or programme will increase the HRD network across the EU as well as globally and establish a broad network of HRD partners down to the local grassroots level. It will also strengthen the connection with EU delegations in the work of monitoring HRDs and providing them with support.
- The platform and/or programme will add value not only in the EU but also globally, as it will be open to all HRD categories and enhance the synergies and global network in terms of resource mapping and processing of best-fit responses, such as providing shelter for HRDs inside and outside the EU. It will build on existing support mechanisms and support new initiatives, including city and NGO shelter partnerships.
- It will also add value as a centre where best practices and lessons learnt are identified and formulated. The platform and/or programme should establish a working group for city shelters and perhaps for other types of shelters. Such a working group should invite focal points from existing shelter initiatives and their close partners (NGOs, government) to meet and share best practices and lessons learnt in hosting an HRD. This will provide practical recommendations on how to host an HRD, how a city/authority or other partner can ensure the best support for the HRD, and the potential benefits for the hosting city.
- The platform and/or programme will add value by reducing the overall constraints. It will also assist shelter initiatives in giving advice on difficult cases and following up with immigration authorities, consular services and international organisations in cases related to travel documents and visas, and provide advice on legal entry conditions in EU Member States. When fast-track or emergency visas are not available, it is important to understand other entry admission avenues (visas and residence permits).

- Finally, it should be relatively feasible to set up a single platform and/or programme under the EIDHR budget, and co-funding could also be explored.

<p>1.16 <i>What are the particular roles of the different stakeholders, i.e. NGOs, local authorities, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, etc in these initiatives?</i></p>
<p><b>2. Political, legal, financial and other types of constraints faced by these NGOs and/or local/regional/national authorities to provide urgent assistance to HRDs</b></p>
<p>2.1 <i>What are the legal, political, financial and other types of needs faced by your NGOs and/or local/regional/national authorities you are cooperating with running the initiatives and programmes? Please state the overall main problem here and elaborate, give examples, figures below</i></p>
<p>2.2 <b>Legal needs</b> (e.g. HRDs rights, rights to family reunification? Right to stay beyond 3 months (Schengen visa) if they can return? Is this enshrined in national law, practice? What are the gaps in current immigration law? What are the opportunities for further harmonization in EU immigration law?)</p>
<p>2.3 <b>Political needs</b> (e.g. cooperation with the MFA, cooperation with MoJ/Mol, aliens authorities, other govt stakeholders; other types of related political needs may be coordination needs, can coordination with embassies/ EU delegations, aliens authorities, international organisations (UNHCR, IOM, ICRC) be further improved on identification, screening, visa processing, fast track procedures, transport, return, re-integration etc, i.e. in the course of the phases, from pre-arrival, arrival, return, post-return.)</p>
<p>2.4 <b>Financial needs</b> (what does it cost to run the shelter per person/family? Are your current funds sufficient to meet the demand? Accommodation costs, pocket money, health insurance, support to carry out activities, support to dependents, psycho-social support etc)</p>
<p>2.5 <b>What are the Strengths/Weaknesses</b> so far experienced by the hosting country in the provision of shelter for HRDs?</p>
<p>2.6 <i>To what extent are host-countries capable of catering for the diverse needs of human rights defenders? Are there any specific provisions in place to cater for specific categories of human rights defenders such as those promoting women's human rights, democracy, freedom of speech and justice etc?</i></p>
<p>2.7 <i>Are there special provisions to support the human rights related activities of the HRDs and ensure the connection with his/her country of origin within the field of human rights is continued?</i></p>

2.8 <i>What are the capacity-building needs of the host countries/organisation?</i>

2.9 <i>What <b>best practices and lessons learnt</b> can be identified with regard to accelerate the procedure from identification to arrival including the issuance of emergency visas for HRDs at risk (including best practices and lessons learned from Member States)?</i>
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<b>3. Need for a structured shelter city network?</b>
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3.1 <i>In your view, based on the above is there a need for a structured city shelter program? Please describe if there is a need for a financial structured instrument, a coordination function, and/or ways of building on existing structures and enhancing synergies and coordination among programmes</i>
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3.2 <i>What would be the key added value of the an EU city shelter program?</i>
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3.3 <i>What is your suggestions and recommendations you wish to put forward in view of the creation of a stable structure of shelter initiatives for HRDs in the EU</i>
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3.4 <i>In order to facilitate the temporary relocation of HRDs at risk, how should synergies among existing and future programmes run by NGOs and cities and their partnership be improved?</i>
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3.5 <i>What are the risks and opportunities for setting up a stable structure or network of local cities and NGOs to ensure a stable and coordinated response by the EU to the need to temporarily shelter human rights defenders at risk (whether within or outside EU 27)?</i>
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