

France candidate  
to the Human Rights Council  
2014-2016





UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré

Human rights are among the founding values of the French Republic and lie at the heart of its foreign policy.

France is presenting its candidacy to the Human Rights Council with a view to promoting the highest standards of human rights protection.

## France's action within the Human Rights Council

**France is actively involved within the Human Rights Council (HRC). It is committed to promoting the effective functioning of human rights mechanisms and to defending the universality of human rights.**

■ France actively promoted the creation of a Human Rights Council capable of responding effectively to human rights violations worldwide. It further affirmed this commitment by actively contributing to strengthening the Human Rights Council. France is also committed to sharing its experience of the Universal Periodic Review with other States and to actively promoting this mechanism.

■ Every year, France tables resolutions within the Human Rights Council, on a national basis as well as in partnership with other States. It hence initiated the creation of a number of HRC Special Procedures, namely the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. More recently, France supported the Council's

adoption of the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

■ Alongside its European partners, France also initiated resolutions calling the international community's attention to the most critical human rights situations. It has played a decisive role in convening several special sessions.

■ As it showed during its previous mandates on the Human Rights Council, France is committed to promoting dialogue and cooperation among all regional and political groups. France will continue to defend the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to help strengthen the Special Procedures.

# Human rights at the heart of French diplomacy

**France is strongly committed to promoting all universal, indivisible, interdependent and closely linked human rights.**



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## Women's rights

- France is mobilizing to end violence and discrimination against women.
- It contributed to the adoption of the Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and is working towards their implementation.
- In 2010, France adopted a National Action Plan to implement these resolutions.

- It supports action by the Human Rights Council Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice which it helped create.
- France supports action by UN Women with which it is developing a number of cooperative actions.

## The rights of the child

- France is at the forefront of the fight against the recruitment and use of child soldiers.
- It was behind the holding of the “Free Children from War” conference organized with UNICEF, which enabled the adoption of the Paris Principles and Commitments. A ministerial follow-up forum to the Paris Commitments is organized yearly to sustain and strengthen the political commitment of States. To date, more than 100 countries have endorsed the Paris Commitments.

## Civil and political rights

- France is especially committed to promoting freedom of opinion and expression, including on the Internet. In particular, it initiated the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006)



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on the protection of journalists in armed conflict and ensures its effective application. France also supported the resolution on the safety of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council.

- It also promotes freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration, and freedom of religion or belief. France contributed to the adoption of the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance which was signed in Paris in February 2007 and entered into force in December 2011. Since then, it has been working towards its universalisation.

- France has submitted resolutions on arbitrary detention to the Human Rights Council.

## Economic, social and cultural rights

- France is working towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and supports the development of a more equitable and sustainable form of globalization.

- It has been especially involved in the fight against extreme poverty, in supporting the recognition and promotion of the right to drinking water and sanitation, to education, and to health.

- In the field of corporate social responsibility, France has actively supported the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the Human Rights Council.

## International criminal justice and transitional justice

- France is working towards the universality of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, and towards the right to the truth and to reparations for victims of human rights violations.

- France is committed to supporting the work of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

## The fight against racial discrimination and xenophobia

- France is highly determined to fight against all forms of discrimination and is participating actively in all Human Rights Council mechanisms for combating racism and xenophobia.

## Rights of the most vulnerable people

- France ensures that the rights of these people are respected under international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

- Furthering the protection of civilians in armed conflict is one of France's top priorities.

France is working to promote a regular dialogue with non-governmental organizations and national institutions for the protection of human rights.

# France undertakes to...

- **Ensure** the promotion and protection of all human rights and to play a key role in combating all forms of discrimination.
- **Support** the gradual realization of the right to education, health, food and water and sanitation, and to promote the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.
- **Strengthen** international mobilization for respect of women's rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, and ensure the effective implementation of the resolutions on "Women, Peace and Security".
- **Pursue** its commitment to the rights of the child and to combat the use of children in armed conflict.
- **Promote** freedom of opinion and expression and support action by human rights defenders and civil society, particularly as part of peaceful demonstrations.
- **Encourage** States to combat arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearance, and continue to work towards the universal ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- **Step up** the fight against impunity and promote the right to truth and justice, particularly by supporting international criminal justice.
- **Promote** the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and support their implementation.
- **Maintain** an active and constructive participation in all bodies and mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights, including special procedures, treaty bodies, and mechanisms for monitoring and investigating human rights violations worldwide.



# Human rights: a tradition and a priority for France

**As a Human Rights Council candidate, France is committed to upholding the highest standard of human rights at a national level.**

■ France has ratified the principal international instruments on human rights. It recognizes the competence of the treaty bodies to receive individual complaints. In the area of international humanitarian law, France is also party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005. It recently signed and will shortly ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights establishing procedures to receive and consider communications under the Protocol.

■ France has issued a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the United Nations for them to visit its territory. It recently welcomed the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

■ France was one of the first countries to participate in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Since 2008, it has made a number of voluntary commitments and implemented most of the recommendations it has received. In 2010, France voluntarily submitted a mid-term report presenting the progress made in implementing approved recommendations. France was



To learn more about France's efforts to promote human rights, please visit [www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/eng](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/eng)

reviewed by the Universal Periodic Review mechanism for the second time on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2013.

As part of its involvement within the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, France is committed to promoting a close dialogue on human rights with its partners. It is also subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.