

David Millett

Clerk of the SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee

By email only to: SSBLR.committee@parliament.scot

28 May 2025

Re: Support for the Scottish Human Rights Commission in the context of the inquiry by the SPCB Supported Landscape Review Committee

Dear Members of the Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee,

Being aware of the work of the Committee, ENNHRI would like to set out the vital role of the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) in promoting and protecting human rights in Scotland.

The Scottish NHRI has been recognised as an A-status institution since 2010, by the [international body](#) responsible for accrediting NHRIs, the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA). This demonstrates the institution's compliance with international standards on NHRIs, [the United Nations Paris Principles](#), and is a respected quality label illustrating its credibility and independence.

A-status accreditation enhances NHRIs' ability to improve international human rights standards and their implementation, and demonstrate international leadership, including through, in cooperation with the UK's other two A-status NHRIs, independent participation rights in the UN Human Rights Council and voting rights in the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI).

Recognising NHRIs' key value for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law

NHRIs are established for the specific purpose of promoting and protecting human rights nationally and are crucial actors in bridging the gap between international human rights obligations and the enjoyment of human rights on the ground. As such, a strong and independent NHRI is recognised [regionally](#) and [internationally](#), as a fundamental contributor to the respect for rule of law, democracy and human rights in-country.

An NHRI is an essential player also for accountability for human rights. Through the Paris Principles, NHRIs are required to be independent and pluralist in their composition and functioning. They support Parliament and other state authorities to meet their human rights obligations, while ensuring their recommendations are informed by civil society and diverse social forces.

European Network of National Human Rights Institutions

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This is demonstrated further by the [UN Belgrade Principles](#) which highlight the crucial link between Parliaments and NHRIs, outlining NHRIs role to advise Parliaments, support them in their oversight and scrutiny functions, and cooperate to ensure stronger human rights outcomes nationally.

As such, NHRIs are indispensable in the system of checks and balances in a healthy democracy.

An opportunity to strengthen the SHRC

The ongoing inquiry by the SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee is an opportunity to strengthen the SHRC, including in follow up to recommendations of the SCA and in compliance with international standards on NHRIs. The review of the SHRC's accreditation status is scheduled for 2026 and will be an opportunity to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Paris Principles as well as actions taken by Scotland to strengthen the Commission, in line with its international obligations.

ENNHRI notes the Committee's deliberation with interest, given the importance of ensuring the effective functioning and resourcing of NHRIs. The Committee's evidence has included proposals to strengthen the powers and resourcing of the SHRC. We hope the opportunity of the inquiry can be used to signal future actions to support the SHRC to deliver its full mandate and function as an A-status NHRI, in line with the UN Paris Principles.

Going forward

We respectfully encourage the Committee, in its review, to recognise the unique role of the Scottish NHRI as well as to support the strengthening of the institution in line with international standards on NHRIs.

ENNHRI remains available to provide further information to national authorities on relevant international and regional standards applicable to NHRIs and their unique role and position within the international and national human rights protection system.

Sincerely,



Louise Holck

ENNHRI Chair



Debbie Kohner

ENNHRI Secretary General