

# Austerity and Human Rights in Europe

**„There are viable alternatives to rigid austerity.“**

Cephas Lumina,  
UN-Independent Expert on foreign debt  
and human rights

The European financial crisis has required affected EU Member States to introduce economic austerity measures in order to combat fiscal deficits. As a result, substantial budget cuts have been designed in these countries with far-reaching social impacts.

This event is organised to shed light on three different country situations, namely Greece, Spain and Ireland. It will analyse the impact of policy changes introduced as a result of austerity measures on the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights in these countries. Part of that analysis involves seeking to understand whether austerity measures limit a state's policy choices and ability to implement its human rights obligations in times of economic constraints. The event will also discuss the extent to which current austerity measures need to be adjusted in order for states to meet their international human rights obligations.

## Venue

Permanent Secretariat  
European Network  
of National Human Rights Institutions  
Salle Breughel, 37 rue de Ligne  
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

## Online-Registration

<http://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/index.php?id=2250>

## Information

Debbie Kohner  
Permanent Secretariat  
European Network  
of National Human Rights Institutions  
Tel. + 32 (0)2 212 3158  
EuroGroupNHRI@cntr.be

European Network  
of National Human Rights Institutions

 Deutsches Institut  
für Menschenrechte

**debatte** ■  
INTERNATIONAL

13 June 2013  
10:30am – 1:30pm  
European Network of  
National Human Rights  
Institutions, Brussels

## Invitation

# Austerity and Human Rights in Europe

The impact of European austerity policies on the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights

The event is organised by the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), which brings together 40 NHRIs from throughout Europe. The European Network of NHRIs has recently opened a Secretariat office in Brussels. This will be the first public event of the European Network of NHRIs in Brussels.

## Programme

13 June 2013  
10.30 to 13.30  
(followed by small lunch)

**10:30 Welcome and introductory remarks**  
**Prof. Alan Miller**, Chair of the European Network of NHRIs and the Scottish Human Rights Commission

**Why austerity policies are an issue for NHRIs in Europe?**

## PART 1

**10:40 Impact of austerity measures on the realization of human rights**  
Chair: **Prof. Alan Miller**

### Country Example A

**Greece – country mission report (April 2013)**

**Dr. Cephias Lumina**, UN-Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, South Africa

**NHRI Perspective:**

**Konstantinos Papaioannou**, Chairman, Greek National Commission for Human Rights

**11:10 Country Example B**

**Spain – parallel reporting with respect to Spain and Discussion in the UN Committee on ESC-Rights**

**Ignacio Saiz**, Executive Director, Center for Economic and Social Rights, USA

**NHRI Perspective:**

**Francisco Fernández Marugán**, First Deputy, Defensor del Pueblo, Spain

**11:40 Country Example C**

**Ireland – report on Ireland**

**Ignacio Saiz**, Executive Director, Center for Economic and Social Rights, USA

**NHRI Perspective:**

**Des Hogan**, Acting Chief Executive, Irish Human Rights Commission

**12:10 Discussion**

## PART 2

**12:40 European austerity policies in light of ESC-rights obligations – do we need a policy review?**

Chair: **Michael Windfuhr**, Deputy Director, German Institute for Human Rights

**Stefan Clauwaert**, Senior Researcher, European Trade Union Institute

**Konstantinos Papaioannou**, Chairman, Greek National Commission for Human Rights

**Ignacio Saiz**, Executive Director, Center for Economic and Social Rights

**Lauri Sivonen**, Advisor to the European Commissioner for Human Rights

**Conclusions**

**13:15 Prof. Alan Miller**