

The French Republic's Human Rights Prize 2009

Call for Applications

Dear Sir/Madam,

The French Republic's Human Rights Prize, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity", for 2009, awarded by the Prime Minister of the French Government, is open to applications.

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

1 – Non-governmental organizations, irrespective of nationality or borders, should present a field mission or project undertaken in France or abroad in 2009 concerning one of two themes.

Theme 1: - Freedom of speech:

Freedom of speech is the meeting point of all human rights. It is intimately linked to freedom of conscience and belief, inherent to individual dignity, but also to freedom of opinion and information in an open society, "without border considerations". It is both an individual and collective freedom. Yet this freedom remains vulnerable, even threatened, and in the field, no country is spared criticism. In a large number of countries around the world, freedom of speech is scorned and those who dare to stand up to the threats, particularly journalists, are harassed, put in prison or killed. While computers offer new means to create and communicate, members of civil society are increasingly censured, prosecuted and punished. Intolerance brings out strong emotions and counter-terrorism and "national security" requirements have at times played a part in curbing freedom of speech and justifying policies aiming at silencing political opposition, and more generally, any criticism, thereby stigmatising human rights defenders.

Action and programmes can deal with the promotion and defence of individual and collective freedom of speech and aims to give a voice to those who have a hard time being heard. To this end, applicants who work to promote defenders of this freedom, who are at times in extremely worrisome situations, are welcome.

Theme 2: The protection of street children

For roughly one out of every ten children, the streets have become the only place where they can live and survive. According to the International Labour Office (ILO) and UNICEF, an estimated 120 million children live in the streets, half of them in South America and 30 million in Asia. Street children come up against dangers and abuse that are often fatal. They suffer from bad weather, hardship, destitution, disease, accidents and indifference. They are harassed and at times executed by militias. They live in insecurity and are victims of violence, trafficking and sexual services. The rule of the survival of the fittest subjects them to extremely harmful relationships and influences. Children are too often sought out at a very young age, sexually exploited and forced to engage in prostitution. Deprived of basic rights, starting with the right to education, children live in appalling conditions and suffer from the worst forms of exploitation and all types of abuse including domestic work which turns into domestic slavery.

Action and programmes can deal with protection of street children and the promotion of all their rights, but also with raising the awareness of political and economic actors about the causes of this problem and possible solutions.

2. Five prize winners will share a total award of €75,000 granted by the Prime Minister.
A special mention will be conferred to the five other prize winners. Applications must comply with the Prize regulations.
The Prize regulations can be sent to you upon request. You can also find the regulations on the Internet. www.cnds.fr
3. The application form in French must include:
 - a) an application letter presented and signed by the president or legal representative of the operating NGO;
 - b) an application stating in detail the aim and description of the work undertaken or project submitted. It must include a precise budget (with an equivalent sum preferably in euros);
 - c) a presentation of the operating NGO (status, work conducted, etc.);
 - d) address and bank details of the NGO.

The applicants must send their complete application without fail, **before the deadline of 30 September 2009**, to the Secrétariat Général de la Commission (35, rue Saint-Dominique, Paris 75007, France) or by e-mail to michel.forst@cncdh.pm.gouv.fr.

- 4 – The jury will announce the winner on 5 November 2009. The 2009 Prize will be presented by the Prime Minister in a formal ceremony around 10 December 2008.

I would be grateful if you would **widely circulate** this call for applications.

Yours sincerely,

Yves Repiquet