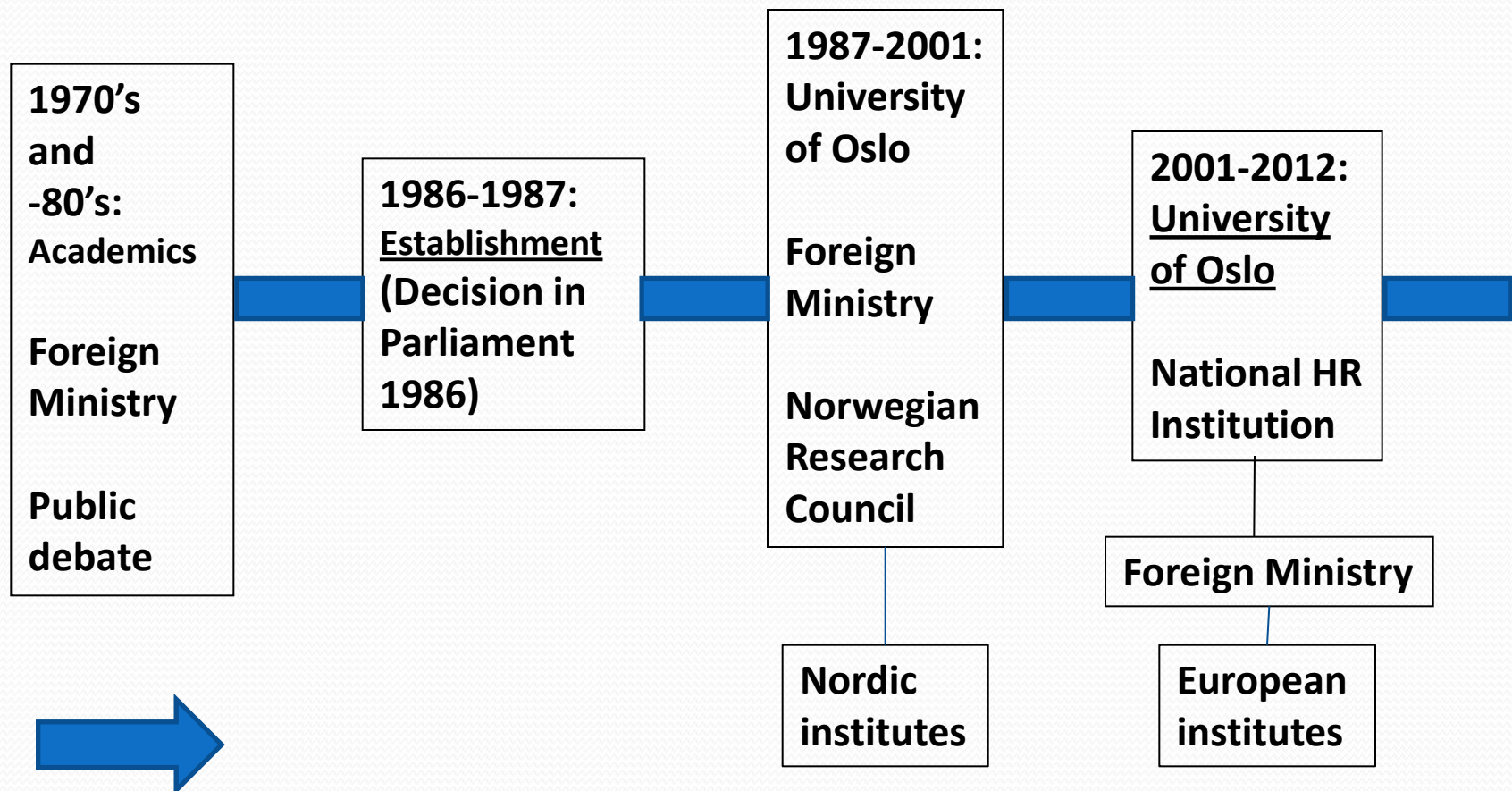


The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights

Mission, Mandate, Structure

By Nils A. Butenshon, Director

NCHR: Development



NCHR: The Mandate

The statutes of the NCHR states:

- The **purpose** of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) is to contribute to the realisation of the internationally adopted human rights by means of scientific research and assessment, training, advice, information and documentation.
- NCHR is **multidisciplinary** and shall promote the study of human rights as an academic discipline at the University of Oslo and in cooperation with national and international partners.
- As Norway's National Institution of Human Rights, NCHR shall **monitor** the human rights situation in Norway and, on an independent basis, cooperate with related research centres, voluntary organisations and international and national bodies working in the field of human rights.
- The **foundation** of NCHR's work is the existing international system of norms and institutions for the protection of human rights.

NCHR today: Major Outputs

- Three broad activities:
 - Research and education
(international master program)
 - International cooperation and
capacity building
 - National Human Rights Institution
 - 65 staff members
 - Budget: Approx. USD 20 million.

Research

- The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights has established four **Thematic Research Areas**:
- **Human Rights and Conflict**
- **Human Rights and Constitutionalism**
- **Human Rights and Development**
- **Human Rights and Diversity**

Case: Human Rights and Diversity

- This group focuses on issues relating to freedom of religion or belief and the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples.
- At present, the group addresses the following issues:
 - **Equality and non-discrimination**
 - **Minority rights and majority/minority conflicts**
 - **Contextual approaches to human rights analysis**
 - **Human rights protection vs. traditional practices**

Human Rights and Diversity (cont.)

- **Individual projects include:**

- Cultural diversity and the exploration of natural resources
- Cultural and linguistic diversity and economic development
- Cultural diversity and human rights based approaches in education
- Traditional institutions and human rights based processes
- Gender equality and freedom of religion or belief
- Sharia and special institutional developments
- Diverse philosophical interpretations of universal human rights

Education

- **Theory and Practice of Human Rights: Two-year M.Phil.**
 - 40 students from 15 countries
 - **Basic Course on Human Rights**



International Cooperation

- The international programmes shall contribute to:
 - Increased awareness of and improved realisation of internationally adopted human rights.
 - This is done through research based exchange, dialogue and interaction.
 - We cooperate with actors that work to promote human rights in countries with extensive human rights challenges and willingness to cooperate.

International Programmes

- **International Programmes:**
 - International Criminal Court Legal Tools
 - NORDEM (The Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights)
 - Socio-Economic Rights Programme
 - The China Autonomy Programme
 - The China Programme
 - The Indonesia Programme
 - The South Africa Programme
 - The Vietnam Programme

Case: The China Programme

- The China Programme was established in 1997 as an academic supplement to the official Human Rights Dialogue between China and Norway.



China Programme: Activities

- **Implementation of human rights training courses and seminars,**
- **Publishing of the first Chinese textbook on international human rights law,**
- **Translation of key human rights literature,**
- **Visiting scholar programmes,**
- **Support of students and researchers both in Norway and China.**

China Programme: Partners

- **The main cooperating partners are Chinese universities and academic institutions. Activities are implemented with partners such as the:**
 - **China Academy of Social Science (CASS)**
 - **China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL)**
 - **Peking University**
 - **Shanghai Jiaotong University**
 - **Shantou University**
 - **Yunnan University**

NCHR as Norway's National Human Rights Institution

- What is a NHRI? What is the purpose?
 - The Paris Principles (UN General Assembly Resolution 48/134 of 1993).
 - Six criteria that define the tasks of NHRI, including:
 - A clearly defined and broad-based mandate based on universal human rights standards
 - Autonomy from government
 - Independence guaranteed by legislation or the constitution
 - Pluralism, including membership that broadly reflects their society
 - Adequate resources
 - Adequate powers of investigation

NCHR: Not a Human Rights Commission

- The 2001 Mandate (Royal Decree): As Norway's National Institution of Human Rights, NCHR shall **monitor** the human rights situation in Norway and, on an independent basis, cooperate with related research centres, voluntary organisations and international and national bodies working in the field of human rights.
- Basically an advisory role towards the Government. Does not take individual complaints.
- 2005: The UN Human Rights Council – new rules and procedures for NHRIs. A stricter interpretation of the Paris Principles. -> NCHR to discontinue as NHRI.