

Regulations for the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

Article 1: The Prize

The Václav Havel Human Rights Prize shall be awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in partnership with the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation every year in order to reward outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights. The Prize shall be awarded in memory of Václav Havel, playwright, fighter against totalitarianism, leader of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, Czechoslovak and Czech President, and an enduring symbol of opposition to despotism.

Article 2: Nature

The Prize shall consist of a sum of sixty thousand euros, which may be subject to periodic adjustment, a trophy and a diploma commending the Prizewinner's outstanding contribution to the cause of human rights.

Article 3: Eligibility

Individuals or non-governmental institutions who or which are active in the defence of human rights may be eligible for consideration.

Article 4: Nominations

1. Nominations for the Prize must reach the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly before 30 June each year. They shall be signed by at least five sponsors, other than the nominee, on the special form appended to these Regulations.
2. Nominations shall provide details of the nominee's action(s) in the defence of human rights and specify the reasons why the nominee's action(s) can be considered to be outstanding. All relevant supporting documents shall be provided.
3. Nominations may be submitted in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe: English or French.

Article 5: Selection Panel

1. A Selection Panel comprising the President of the Assembly or a person designated by him/her, and six independent persons with recognised moral standing in the field of human rights shall examine the nominations, submit a shortlist of three nominees to the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly for information and, subsequently, designate the Prizewinner for the year in question (see also Articles 6 and 7 below).
2. The six independent experts referred to in the preceding paragraph shall not be current members of the Assembly. Three members shall be appointed by the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly and three members by the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation. The six independent experts shall be appointed for a two-year period, renewable twice.
3. The Selection Panel shall be chaired by the President of the Assembly or the person designated by him/her.
4. In the event that the Selection Panel considers that none of the nominations put forward is sufficiently outstanding, it shall inform the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation accordingly.

Article 6: Decision on the Prizewinner

1. The Selection Panel shall, in a first sitting, draw up a shortlist of three nominees. The names of these nominees shall subsequently be made public by the President of the Assembly.
2. In a second sitting, the Panel shall designate the Prizewinner out of the shortlist. This decision shall be taken by an absolute majority of the votes cast, the day before the opening of the Fourth part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly.
3. The name of the Prizewinner shall be announced by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly in plenary, during the opening of the Fourth part-session of the Assembly.
4. The calendar of events shall be as follows:
 - a. 30 June: deadline for submission of nominees for the Prize;
 - b. August: first meeting of the Selection Panel (Prague); selection of a shortlist of three nominees;
 - c. First week of September: transmission to the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of a shortlist of three nominees for information;
 - d. Sunday before the Fourth part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly: second meeting of the Selection Panel (Strasbourg), selection of the Prizewinner from the shortlist.

Article 7: Award Ceremony

1. The Prize shall be awarded at a ceremony which shall take place in Strasbourg on the Monday of the Fourth part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly.
2. The former Czech First Lady, Ms Dagmar Havlova, shall be invited to honour the ceremony with her presence.
3. The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly shall approve the arrangements for the ceremony.

Article 8: Conference in honour of Prizewinner

1. The Václav Havel Library shall organise, at a later date, an international conference in Prague in honour of the Prizewinner.