



PRESS RELEASE

## VÁCLAV HAVEL HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

21. January 2014; Prague

**The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has yesterday issued a call for nominations for the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, which will be awarded for the second consecutive year on 29 September next in Strasbourg.**

This Prize aims to reward outstanding civil society action in defending human rights in Europe and beyond. Candidates should have made a real difference to the human rights situation of a given group, been instrumental in uncovering systemic violations on a large scale, or have successfully mobilised public opinion or the international community for a given cause.

"In their daily struggle against injustice, arbitrariness and authoritarianism, human rights defenders work ceaselessly so that each citizen in Europe may one day aspire to our standards. We should encourage and place the spotlight on those who commit themselves to human rights," said PACE President Jean-Claude Mignon.

### **The Prize**

The [Václav Havel Human Rights Prize](#) is awarded each year by the PACE in partnership with the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation to reward outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe and beyond.

The Prize is awarded in memory of Václav Havel, playwright, opponent of totalitarianism, architect of the Velvet Revolution of 1989, President of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic and an enduring symbol of opposition to despotism. Nominations of any individual, non-governmental organisation or institution working to defend human rights are taken into consideration. The Prize consists of a sum of €60 000, a trophy and a diploma.

On 25 March 2013, the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize was launched at a ceremony in Prague with the signature of the Co-operation Agreement by the President of the Assembly, Jean-Claude Mignon, the Director of the Václav Havel Library, Marta Smolíková, and the Chair of the Steering Committee of the Charta 77 Foundation, František Janouch, in the presence of Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg. The Václav Havel Human Rights Prize replaces the Assembly Human Rights Prize, which was created in 2007 and awarded every two years, first in 2009 to "British Irish Human Rights Watch" and then, in 2011, to the Russian NGO "Committee against Torture".

### **Who can be nominated?**

Individuals or non-governmental institutions active in the defence of human rights can be nominated for the Prize.

### **Submission of nominations**

Nominations for the Prize should be addressed to the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly and be signed by at least five sponsors, other than the nominee, on the special form to be found at the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize website.

Nominations shall provide details of the nominee's work in the defence of human rights and specify the reasons why the nominee's work can be considered to be outstanding. Relevant supporting documents should be provided. Nominations should be submitted in either of the two official languages of the Council of Europe, English or French.

### **The Selection Panel**

The Selection Panel of the Prize is composed of the President of the Assembly (or a person designated by him/her) and six independent persons (who cannot be current members of the Assembly) with recognised moral standing in the field of human rights.

The Panel will 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.

Three Panel members are appointed by the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly and three Panel members by the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation. The six independent experts are appointed for a two-year period, renewable twice.

The Panel is chaired by the President of the Assembly or the person designated by him/her.

### **The Award Ceremony**

The Prize will be awarded at a ceremony which shall take place in Strasbourg on the Monday of the Autumn Session of the Parliamentary Assembly, usually in late September or early October.

The name of the Prizewinner is announced by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The former Czech First Lady, Dagmar Havlova, is invited to honour the ceremony with her presence.

### **Award winners**

- Václav Havel Human Rights Prize 2013 awarded to Ales Bialiatski

### **Conference in honour of the Prizewinner**

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

### **Timetable for 2014:**

- **30 April 2014:** deadline for submission of nominees for the 2014 Prize.
- **26 August 2014:** first meeting of the Selection Panel in Prague which will shortlist three candidates out of the candidatures received.

- **28 September 2014:** second meeting of the Selection Panel in Strasbourg which will select the final Prizewinner from the shortlist
- **29 September 2014:** Prize Award Ceremony in Strasbourg in the Debating Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly during its Autumn Session

Further information

- [Nomination form](#)
- [Regulations](#)

**Knihovna Václava Havla**  
**[www.vaclavhavel-library.org](http://www.vaclavhavel-library.org)**  
**[info@vaclavhavel-library.org](mailto:info@vaclavhavel-library.org)**  
**[hrprize.pace@coe.int](mailto:hrprize.pace@coe.int)**  
**+333 9021 48 27**