

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary has launched a series of international human rights conferences, to be held annually under the name of “Budapest Human Rights Forum”. The Fourth Budapest Human Rights Forum takes place on 26-27th October 2011 in the premises of the Hungarian MFA, in Budapest.

The two-day long discussion will be carried out within the framework of four panel debates with the participation of five or six panellists in each panel and a human rights expert as a moderator.

Planned themes for the four panels:

1. Activities and representation of the European Union in the field of human rights
2. Human rights, equal opportunities for and the role of women – gender policies
3. Responsibility to protect in practice
4. Human rights aspects of the ‘Arab spring’

The **first panel** will focus on the activities and representation of the European Union in the field of human rights. The EU continues to consider human rights as a priority both in its bilateral relations and in the multilateral fora. However the representation of the EU has considerably changed since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the newly established External Action Service along with Member States are committed to fight against any human rights violation. The panel discussion aims at providing a deeper insight into the human rights policy of the EU and at discussing its priorities and efficiency in different fora.

The **second panel** will deal with gender issues and women’s rights. Taking into consideration that this year is marked by the 100th anniversary of the international Women’s Day the panel discussion aims at drawing attention to the challenges women face with regard to the full enjoyment of human rights and their role in the society. During the panel discussion consideration could also be given to the activities of the newly established UN organ, UN Women and to synergies with national institutions, particularly in the phase of state building.

The **third panel** will focus on the implementation of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect in practice. The international community has not witnessed concrete actions on the basis of this principle, but earlier this year in the context of the events in Northern-Africa. This panel aims at analysing the effects in the field, how the R2P concept could work in practice, with special regard to the role of regional and sub-regional organizations.

The **fourth panel** will tackle with the human rights aspects of the Arab spring. During the last half year we witnessed considerable changes in the Northern part of Africa and the Near East, which are partly based and closely related to human rights issues, such as freedom of speech and assembly. Considering the events going on in several countries in the region possibilities for and challenges to a democratic transition could be discussed at the forum.