How are human rights best protected? Are nation-states providing the best protection of individuals’ Human Rights or is there a need for international institutions to protect individuals against states? These debates have resurfaced in recent years, and many see the need for a renewed campaign for the protection of human rights.

In Europe, human rights have increasingly come under pressure. The fight against terrorism, the refugee crisis and transnational crime have put the existing human rights system under pressure. In Denmark, and elsewhere, critics have argued for the need to amend existing human rights conventions, claiming that they are out of date, even out of sync, with contemporary globalizing society. More generally, some claim that international human rights put too many constraints on national democratic decision-making, stating the importance of national sovereignty. Most extremely, some politicians have simply proposed to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Danish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has prioritized a critical examination of the work of the European Human Rights Court. The goal of this conference is to debate and scrutinize the future human rights and particularly the reform process instigated by the Danish Chairmanship. We therefore ask the question: Who offers the best protection for Human Rights?

Program:

12.30: Doors open

13.00: Welcome and introduction, by New Europe, Secretary General Julie Rosenkilde and Moderator of the conference (TBC)

13.10: Welcoming speech by Secretary General, Thorbjørn Jagland, Council of Europe (TBC)

13.25: The future of European human rights: The Copenhagen Declaration and Beyond (in Danish):
Why are regional and international Human Rights institutions so important? By Jens Vedsted-Hansen, Professor at the University of Århus

Which tendencies, myths and conceptions do we see in Europe and the new fight for Human Rights? By Trine Christensen, Secretary General, Amnesty International Denmark

Explaining the reform process of the European human rights system: The place of the Copenhagen Declaration? By Mikael Rask Madsen, Professor and Director at iCourts, University of Copenhagen

Q & A

14.15: Group discussions among the audience on the following questions:

1. How do you perceive human rights and what do they mean to you?
2. Is there a need for international institutions to protect individuals and why?
3. What are the counter-strategies when human rights are being assaulted?

14.45: Break

15.15: The future European human rights system: International perspectives on the Copenhagen Declaration and reform. Panel discussion between:

- Director of Legal Advice and Public International Law, Jörg Polakiewicz, Council of Europe,
- Vice President Angelika Nussberger, European Court of Human Rights,
- Director of the European Regional Programme, Roisin Pillay, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ),
- Executive director, James A. Goldston, Open Society Justice Initiative

Q & A from the audience

16.25-16.30 Closing remarks

The first two parts of the conference will be held in Danish. The last session will be held in English. We are looking forward to your participation and kindly ask you to register before April 9, 2018 at 10 am.

https://nyteuropa.nemtilmeld.dk/31/

The conference is organised by the Faculty of Law at Copenhagen University, New Europe and Amnesty International, Denmark in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council, the Danish Helsinki Committee and the Danish Institute of Human Rights.