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IHF Forced to Close Down

Vienna, 7 December 2007

Dear colleagues, friends and supporters,

With deep regret I must inform you that on 27 November 2007, in my capacity as the President of the “International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF)”, I was forced to submit a request of bankruptcy to the Commercial Court in Vienna to start an insolvency procedure (the IHF is registered in Austria and is therefore bound by Austrian law). This had to be done due to the Federation’s grave financial crisis caused by an economic crime. The former IHF financial manager has been taken in pre-trial detention after he confessed to having embezzled a large amount of money over several years. Two other external persons are under investigation as well. Their criminal trial will start in early January next year.

As a result, as of 27 November 2007, the IHF is a NGO in dissolution. Its office will be closed within a few days and the organization can no longer implement projects, organize human rights advocacy, issue statements or reports. On January 30th, 2008, the liquidator who primarily has to bear in mind the interests of the creditors of the IHF will present the final results of his efforts to the Commercial Court which then will decide upon the final liquidation of the organization.

I would like to take this occasion to thank you all for your cooperation, your interest and support in the past years and wish you all the best for the future.

Sincerely,

Ulrich Fischer, Former IHF-President

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COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS: THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTER – HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT FRONTIERS – MENTAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY CENTER