



Protect Defenders EU: Appointment of the Director / Head of Secretariat

Job Title:	Director / Head of Secretariat (Permanent, Full-Time)
Department:	Executive Management
Reports To:	Board of Directors
Location:	Brussels, Belgium
Protect Defenders website:	https://protectdefenders.eu/

Role Summary:

The Secretariat of ProtectDefenders.eu is a coordination entity based in Brussels acting under the supervision of the Board of Directors composed of four international leading NGO's. The Director of the Secretariat is responsible for providing strategic leadership and overall management to the Secretariat team. This role encompasses oversight of all operational, financial, and administrative functions, including direct supervision of the Heads of Programs & Partnerships and the Head of Finance & Operations. The Director will represent ProtectDefenders.eu at the highest levels, including with donors, the Board, and the Consortium of ProtectDefenders which is composed of 12 international and regional civil society organisations for the protection of human rights defenders. This role also involves strategic guidance to departments, ensuring alignment with the mechanism's mission and goals, as well as fundraising.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Strategic Leadership and Coordination:

- Provide visionary leadership and strategic direction for ProtectDefenders.eu, ensuring alignment with the mission and objectives of the Mechanism.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan, including setting long-term goals and priorities.
- Coordinate and provide strategic guidance to all departments, including Programs & Partnerships, Finance & Operations, and others as needed.
- Responsible for fundraising and organizational growth in line with Board and Consortium

2. Management of Programs and Partnerships:

- Oversee the implementation and effectiveness of all programs and partnerships.
- Strategic leader with the ability to engage and empower senior leaders in co-creating solutions.

- Provide support and oversight for the development and execution of program strategies and annual work plans.

3. Financial Oversight and Administration:

- Collaborate with the Head of Finance (HoF) & Operations, ensuring robust financial management, budgeting, and compliance with financial regulations.
- With the HoF, ensure that administrative operations support the efficient functioning of the Secretariat, including human resources, IT, and office management.

4. Relations with Donors and Board:

- Build and maintain strong relationships with EU donors, providing regular updates on progress and financial status and cultivating strategic alliances.
- Represent ProtectDefenders.eu in high-level external meetings, including negotiating funding agreements and ensuring donor requirements are met.
- Validate consolidated narrative and financial reporting to the EU.
- Serve as the primary liaison with the Board, providing regular updates on performance, strategic initiatives, overall financial overview and key issues.
- Lead and coordinate board meetings (agenda, reporting)

5. Consortium Engagement:

- Engage with the Consortium of ProtectDefenders at the highest level, ensuring effective collaboration and communication among consortium members.
- Lead and coordinate consortium meetings, ensuring that agenda items align with the strategic goals and priorities of ProtectDefenders.eu.

6. Advocacy and Representation:

- Provide high-level advocacy, where directed by the Board, and representation for ProtectDefenders.eu, including engaging with EU institutions and other key stakeholders.
- Represent ProtectDefenders.eu at conferences, public forums, and strategic meetings as needed.

7. Leadership and Line Management:

- Directly supervise the Head of Programs & Partnerships and Head of Finance & Operations, providing leadership, support, and performance management.
- Foster a positive and productive work environment, encouraging professional development and team collaboration, learning and excellence.
- Ensure that staff are aligned with the Secretariat goals and have the resources needed to succeed.

8. Operational Oversight:

- Implement and monitor policies and procedures to ensure compliance with legal, ethical, and organizational standards.
- Manage organizational risks and ensure that appropriate risk mitigation strategies are in place.

Qualifications and Experience:

- Master's degree in Human Rights, International Relations, Business Administration, Finance, or a related field. A relevant professional qualification is also acceptable.
- At least 5 years of senior management experience in a similar role, preferably within the non-profit sector with a focus on human rights or international development and preferably with Consortium experience.
- Inspirational leader with vast strategic delivery and people management experience and a track record of working in the international humanitarian or human rights sector.
- Experience in successful management, leadership, risk management, and development in a complex international network.
- They must have a strong understanding and experience of the needs of human rights defenders at risk and holistic protection responses.
- Decisive, result and solution-focused and will have demonstrable experience in building and maintaining effective working relationships, both internally and externally.
- Strategic ability to operate in a complex structure and will understand what constitutes good governance and appropriate risk management with ability to set and articulate a clear vision for the organization and drive its strategic objectives.
- Fluent in English; written and verbal competency in French and additional languages are an asset.

Skills and Competencies:

- Leadership: Proven leadership skills with the ability to manage and motivate senior staff, foster team collaboration, and drive organizational success.
- Financial Acumen: Strong financial management skills, including budgeting, financial reporting, and compliance.
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, with the ability to effectively represent ProtectDefenders.eu to a wide range of stakeholders.
- Relationship Management: Proven ability to build and maintain relationships with donors, board members, Consortium members, and other key stakeholders.
- Problem-Solving: Strong problem-solving skills, with the ability to address complex issues and make data-driven decisions.
- Operational Management: Ability to oversee and improve operational processes, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in organizational activities.
- Strong interpersonal skills and a managerial style that fosters inclusivity, mutual respect, and collaboration.
- Politically astute, with demonstrable experience in contributing to a conducive policy environment, influencing policy processes at the global, regional, and national levels and a clear understanding of the context for human rights defenders.
- Sensitivity towards gender, ethnic and cultural identities and related dynamics, and an understanding of equitable employment strategies.
- Integrity, sound judgment, cultural intelligence, and passion for Equality Diversity and Inclusion in an international context, with an ability to foster respect internally and externally and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Selection and Appointment:

- This is a permanent position based in Brussels with occasional travel required to meet with stakeholders, partners, human rights defenders and attend conferences and other events.
- The Director may be required to work outside regular office hours to meet project deadlines or attend meetings and events.
- Gross monthly salary range: €6,500 – €7,000 depending on experience and seniority.
- 13th month salary and holiday pay according to Belgian law
- Pension scheme contribution and medical insurance
- Transportation and home-working allowances
- Meal vouchers and Eco-vouchers
- Pro-rata 20 legal days holidays + 6 extra legal days

Application Process:

Please provide an up-to-date CV and a one-page cover letter that clearly defines your suitability and motivation for the role via the Front Line Defenders (*Board Member of ProtectDefenders.eu*) job vacancies web page:

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/recruitment-volunteering>

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for letter writing is not accepted

Closing Date for Applications:

Vacancy open until **midnight Monday, 2 June 2025**

By joining ProtectDefenders.eu, you will contribute to a meaningful mission dedicated to protecting human rights defenders worldwide. We look forward to receiving your application.

ProtectDefenders.eu is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from individuals of all backgrounds and experiences. We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse work environment.