



On Human Rights Day, the European Union pays tribute to human rights defenders who dedicate their lives to promoting and protecting people's fundamental rights around the world. This year, [Human Rights Day](#) focuses on the work of human rights defenders, and on how social media can be used to promote and underpin change.

The Arab spring vividly reminds us that human rights are universal and that people everywhere aspire to live in dignity and freedom. In 2011, thousands of people decided that the time had come to claim their rights. Social media carried their message, and allowed activists and individuals to break free from their isolation, to disseminate ideas and to denounce oppression.

Use of social media to promote human rights should not be restricted by governments. The EU has repeatedly and publicly condemned restrictions on freedom of expression and on access to the internet, as well as the arrest of bloggers, witnessed in many countries around the world.

**\*\* Original source:** [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126713.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126713.pdf)