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| 1. Record Nr. | UNISALENTO991004378737107536 |
| Autore | Bluche, François |
| Titolo | Louis XIV / François Bluche |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Paris : Fayard1986 |
| ISBN | 2213015686 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1039 p. ; 22 cm |
| Disciplina | 944.033092 |
| Soggetti | Luigi XIV <re di Francia>
Luigi XIV <re di Francia>
Francia Storia 1643-1715 |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Francese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
-
- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 2. Record Nr. | UNINA9910404140103321 |
| Titolo | Compendium of documents on National Human Rights Institutions in eastern and southern Africa |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Pretoria University Law Press (PULP), 2019 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (898 p.) |
| Soggetti | Law |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Nota di contenuto | An overview of NHRIS in Eastern and Southern Africa -- The Ombudsman of Angola -- The office of the Ombudsman in Botswana -- The Burundian Independent National Human Rights Commission -- The Democratic Republic of the Congo's National Commission on |

Human Rights -- The Swaziland Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration Integrity -- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission -- The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights -- The Lesotho Human Rights Commission -- The Malawi Human Rights Commission -- The National Human Rights Commission on Mauritius -- The Rwandan National Commission for Human Rights -- The South African Human Rights Commission -- The Tanzanian Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance -- The Zambian Human Rights Commission -- The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission -- National human rights institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa: lessons and prospects for the future.

Sommario/riassunto

Africa's increasing recognition and protection of human rights have been accompanied by a surge in the number of NHRIs established with broad mandates to promote and protect human rights. The mandates and powers of the NHRIs vary from country to country, as does their ability to deliver on these mandates. Indeed, the rapid increase in the number of NHRIs in Africa has come with a variety of substantive and operational challenges. In the face of such challenges, those who work in NHRIs need to understand the broader regional and global context in which the institutions operate and the changing nature of human rights issues. This compendium provides an overview of NHRIs in eastern and southern Africa. It is guided to a large extent by the internationally agreed-upon Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions, referred to as the Paris Principles. These Principles are broadly accepted as the benchmark against which the legitimacy and credibility of NHRIs can be assessed. Endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, the Paris Principles provide NHRIs with guidelines as to their competence and responsibilities, their composition and guarantees of independence and pluralism, and their methods of operation; additional principles relate to the status of commissions with quasi-judisdictional competence. The generous financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Rule of Law for Sub-Saharan Africa, Nairobi, Kenya office, is gratefully acknowledged.
