

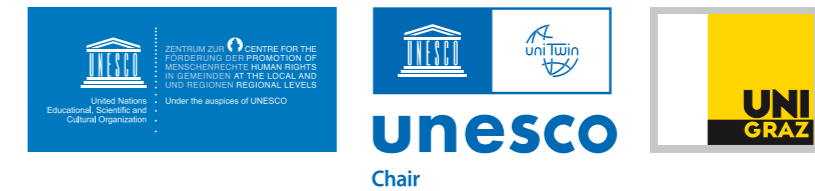
*We work for*  
**human rights**

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## Anniversary Edition

**International Centre for the Promotion of Human  
Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the  
auspices of UNESCO**

**UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security,  
European Training and Research Centre for Human  
Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz**



International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the  
Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO

UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security, European  
Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at  
the University of Graz

Elisabethstrasse 50B | 8010 Graz | Austria

**This publication is available online.**  
[humanrightsgolocal.org](http://humanrightsgolocal.org)

## About us

### International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO

The International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO Centre) was founded by unanimous vote of UNESCO's General Conference in 2017 and has been endorsed by the Parliament in 2019. The Centre contributes to the implementation of the international human rights agenda at the local and regional levels. Situated in Graz, Austria, the Centre promotes a human rights-based approach to policy-making and practice at the local and regional levels, building on 25 years of experience and expertise. The Centre supports inclusive and equitable social development through research, capacity-building, international cooperation, and networking activities. The Centre is hosted by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz) and cooperates closely with the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security at the University of Graz.



[www.humanrightsgolocal.org](http://www.humanrightsgolocal.org)

### UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security at the University of Graz

The UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security (UNESCO Chair) was established at the University of Graz in 2014 with the aim of strengthening interdisciplinary teaching, research, academic cooperation and outreach in human rights and human security. The UNESCO Chair is hosted by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC) and cooperates with the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO, which was established in Graz in 2019. The Chair and its team are dedicated to supporting UNESCO's objectives of lifelong learning and human rights education as a means to promote global citizenship, create inclusive societies and foster peace and stability. The Chair contributes to the University's interdisciplinary research in human rights and human security. Its establishment expresses the commitment of the University of Graz to human rights, advances international academic cooperation and supports the activities of the City of Graz, the first European human rights city.



[trainingszentrum-menschenrechte.uni-graz.at/en/unesco-chair](http://trainingszentrum-menschenrechte.uni-graz.at/en/unesco-chair)

### European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz)

The European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz) deals both theoretically and practically with issues relating to the implementation of human rights and democracy at local and regional levels. The Centre provides its expertise and professional skills in consulting, training and research activities. The aim is to promote human rights education worldwide, to implement human rights at local and regional levels and to counteract racism and discrimination by actively strengthening democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human security. Due to the long-standing cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), studies and reports are regularly published as part of the centre's activity. In its function as the office of the Human Rights Advisory Council of the City of Graz, ETC Graz publishes the annual Human Rights Report of the City of Graz. Furthermore, the Centre is the publisher of the handbook on human rights education "Understanding Human Rights" and implemented in cooperation with the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) the policy handbook "Toolkit for Equality." ETC Graz was founded in 1999 in Graz, Austria.



[www.etc-graz.eu](http://www.etc-graz.eu)

### European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC)

The European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC) is an interdisciplinary centre based at the Law Faculty of the University. The Centre is engaged in research, teaching and knowledge transfer (science to public) in the field of human rights. It conducts research on issues of international human rights protection, human rights education, the implementation of human rights at the local level, and migration and refugee law. It is co-editor of the European Yearbook on Human Rights and the publication series Human Rights Go Local. The Centre is a contact point for human rights issues at the University of Graz, provides students of all faculties with a range of courses on human rights and coordinates the interdisciplinary doctoral program Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity and Gender. It is active in international research and higher education networks such as the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI) and the Global Campus of Human Rights. The Centre hosts the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security and cooperates with the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO.

UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ  
European Training and Research Centre for  
Human Rights and Democracy



[trainingszentrum-menschenrechte.uni-graz.at](http://trainingszentrum-menschenrechte.uni-graz.at)

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## Foreword by the Directors

The International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO and the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security, hosted by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz, are happy to present the annual report 2024. This is the fifth report on our joint activities and highlights our achievements of collaborative efforts in human rights research, education and capacity building.

2024 saw another edition of our flagship activity, namely the fourth edition of the annual Academy and Conference “Human Rights Go Local: What Works” in February, held online in cooperation with our distinct partners at the United Nations and the Council of Europe, with support by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Provincial Government of Styria, the City of Graz, and the University of Graz. Human rights experts from local governments, international and regional organisations and academia came together online and in person to discuss “Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments.” The event was preceded by the launch of the 5th volume of our jointly edited publication series “Human Rights Go Local” and was concluded with a high-level conference which adopted a comprehensive Outcome Document available to interested stakeholders on our website.

In 2024 our Centre was also instrumental in organising the awarding of the Human Rights Prize of the University of Graz to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) for its crucial work in documenting serious human rights violations in Belarus.

Other highlights of the year included the adoption and presentation of the revised UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, to which UNESCO Chair Gerd Oberleitner has contributed to the negotiations at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris in 2023. The newly adopted Recommendation updates the “1974” recommendation, which nearly five decades ago united Member States in recognizing education as a crucial driver of peace and international understanding.

We have also contributed to the 2024 edition of the annual Gwangju World Human Rights Cities Forum, where we hosted a human rights paper session on the role of civil society in shaping a “new social contract in human rights cities.”

Our publications include the mentioned 5th volume of the “Human Rights Go Local” publication series, a chapter on human rights budgeting in a forthcoming volume on “Human Rights Economies and Subnational Governance: Theory and Practice” (edited by Martha Davies, Savitri Bisnath and Morten Kjaerum; Routledge 2025), co-authored by Markus Möstl, Gerd Oberleitner and Klaus Starl, and the 15th edition of our flagship publication, the “European Yearbook on Human Rights”, co-edited by Gerd Oberleitner and Lisa Heschl together with colleagues from Salzburg and Vienna, bringing together renowned scholars, practitioners and emerging voices to discuss human rights developments in Europe.

The capacity-building project ACTION, which aims to improve the usability and dissemination of anti-racism strategies and tools on the local level, resulted in 15 cities developing human rights action plans and 22 capacity-building videos, and a successful social media campaign reaching more than 100,000 people. SCORE, a project aimed at supporting cities to confront racism through and in sports, was successfully completed with a planning model for combating racism that is now available to local municipalities.

We continued to engage with old and new partners, including the City of Bregenz, local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the City of Maó in Spain and Ukrainian universities within the Erasmus+ project “Promoting Academic Freedom in Ukraine” and thus contributed to the essence of UNESCO’s 2017 Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers. Our work on preventing extremism in schools (with five workshops being held), human rights trainings and education activities continued. Our Centre contributed to the 12th World Urban Forum in Cairo, welcomed a Finnish governmental delegation in Graz, engaged with ECCAR and ICCAR, and organised a range of academic activities, including the successful participation of students at a simulation of the UN Human Rights Council at the University of Padova, the Helga Pederson Moot Court on human rights in St. Gallen, and a training module on human rights cities at the University of Padova. The UNESCO Chair offered foundational, advanced, specialised, and skill-building courses in human rights at the University of Graz, as well as the Doctoral Programme in Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity, and Gender, and taught in international master’s programmes, including the Global Campus of Human Rights. In addition, we have welcomed three visiting scholars at our Centre.

2024 also gave us the opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy as an association under Austrian law in 1999, aimed at providing human rights education and training for all, and to celebrate also the 15th anniversary of the inclusion of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy into the University of Graz as a research centre located at the Faculty of Law. 2024 also reminded us, the UNESCO Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels is now active in its fifth year, since it was started in 2019 and formally installed in 2020. Congratulations and many thanks to all our founders, team members, trainers, volunteers and collaborators, donors, partners, and friends over the years, and to the University of Graz, the Management Board and Foundation, as well as our Scientific Board for their continued support and commitment to the promotion of human rights.

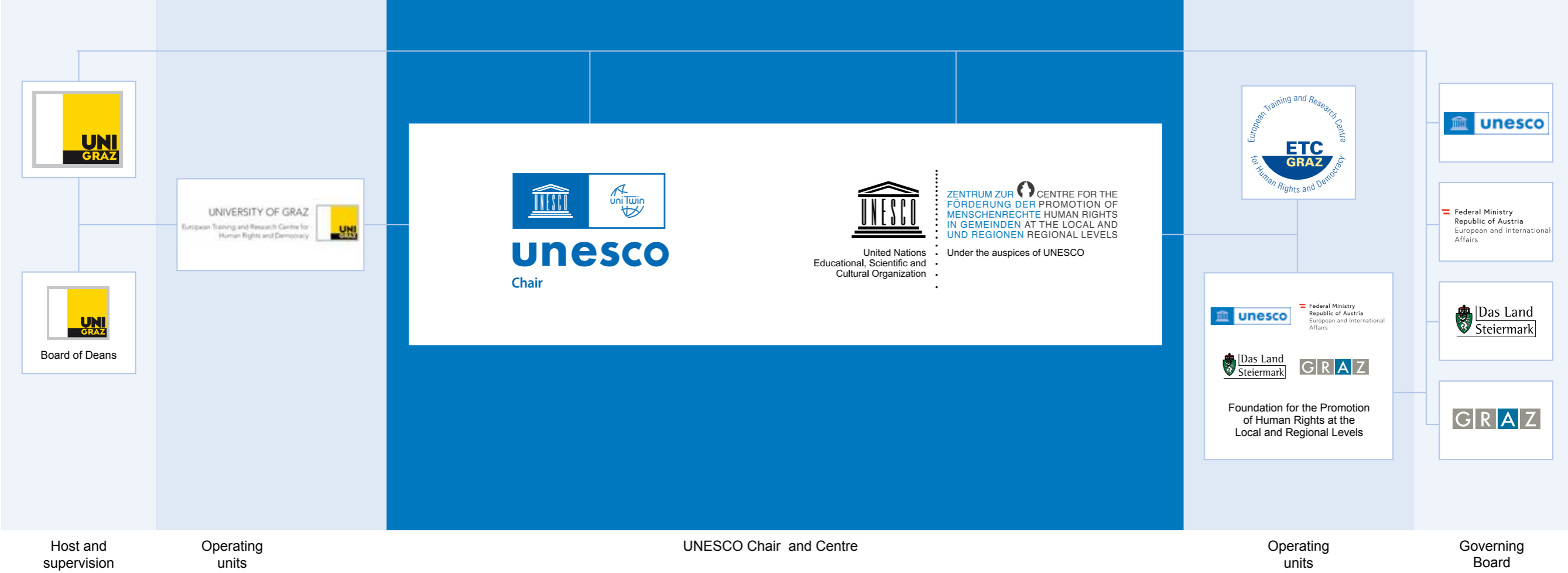


**Gerd Oberleitner**  
UNESCO Chair in  
Human Rights and  
Human Security at the  
University of Graz



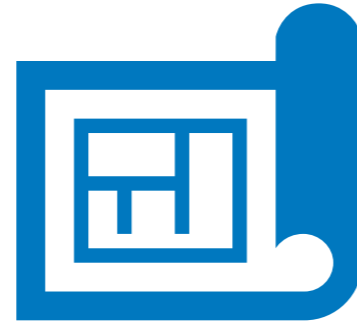
**Klaus Starl**  
Director of the International  
Centre for the Promotion of  
Human Rights at the Local  
and Regional Levels under  
the auspices of UNESCO

# Mapping the Cooperation between the UNESCO Centre and the UNESCO Chair



The connecting lines signify cooperation agreements. The coloured areas indicate functional areas.

## Strategic Work Programme



Human rights education, training and capacity-building are cornerstones for the effective implementation of human rights at the national, regional and local levels. Knowledge of human rights is a prerequisite for active participation in democratic decision-making. UNESCO's goals of lifelong learning and human rights education are important means of promoting global citizenship, creating inclusive societies and fostering peace and stability. Human rights research must be the basis for evidence-based policymaking in cities and communities. Cities and local authorities are at the heart of addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change and conflict. Local governments are closest to citizens and best equipped to make human rights a lived experience in their operations and interactions with citizens.

Based on the importance of human rights education and research, and in recognition of the role of cities and local authorities in the realisation of human rights, the joint work programme of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Level under the auspices of UNESCO and the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights and Human Security at the University of Graz focuses on building capacities for the protection of human rights in the spirit of the UN vision of "leaving no one behind." As part of UNESCO's global UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs network and within the framework of UNESCO's Education 2030 Strategy, the UNESCO Chair provides academic training and learning opportunities in human rights and human security to support the next generation of human rights experts, engages in collaborative human rights research and promotes international academic cooperation. The UNESCO Centre is built on three key pillars: facilitating the exchange between research and policymaking at the local and regional levels; enabling the implementation of human rights-based policies; and building bridges between international, regional and local actors and agendas.

As an overall strategic programme, Chair and Centre jointly undertake the following activities:

- Supporting the Human Rights City of Graz, as well as the Province of Styria, building partnerships with and between human rights cities and establishing links with partner institutions, international organisations and city networks;
- Working with the African Local Government Academy (ALGA of UCLG Africa) to provide training for African city administrations;
- Developing and implementing human rights policies in Arab regions, from Iraq to Mauritania, with nine cooperating states and 38 cities;
- Developing and publishing policy handbooks for the implementation of human rights in cities, particularly with the ICCAR and its regional Coalitions for Inclusive Cities, where best practices are collected, analysed, contextualised and published as handbooks under the auspices of UNESCO;
- Exchanging at the global level by organizing the annual academy and conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works" to identify and elaborate good practices and encourage policy makers worldwide to implement human-rights-based approaches within their competencies;

- Maintaining a Human Rights Lab (LABS!) to test, evaluate and refine human rights policies and make them transferrable to cities sharing the same needs and interests with the aim of strengthening accountability by various means including certification procedures;
- Promoting research on the implementation of international agendas, such as the Agenda 2030, the Right to Science or the Human Rights Economy;
- Providing academic training and developing learning methods and teaching tools to build the capacity of the next generation of human rights educators, practitioners and researchers through international cooperation and academic mobility, hosting visiting scholars and volunteers, and contributing to the Global Campus of Human Rights;
- Encouraging the next generation of researchers in the Doctoral Programme in Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity and Gender to study human rights at the local and regional level;
- and publishing and disseminating research findings, for example in the "Human Rights Go Local" series and the "European Yearbook of Human Rights."

All these strands of engagement are complemented by intense multi-stakeholder-cooperation activities with UN Agencies and regional organisations. These strands were concretely implemented by means of the activities described in the thematic chapters of this report 2024.





# STAFF AND BOARD 2024

## Staff and Board 2024

### Management of the UNESCO Centre

#### Klaus Starl

Director of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO

#### Gerd Oberleitner

UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security, Director of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC), Professor in International Law and the Law of International Organisations

#### Heidi Bassin

Board member of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz)

### Management of the UNESCO Chair

#### Gerd Oberleitner

UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security, Director of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC), Professor in International Law and the Law of International Organisations

#### Lisa Heschl

Deputy Director of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC)

### Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels

#### Renate Kicker

Director

#### Gabriela Ramos

Representative of UNESCO in the Governing Board

#### Waltraud Bauer-Dorner

Representative of the Provincial Government of Styria in the Governing Board

#### Markus Uitz

Director

#### Ernst-Peter Brezovszky

Representative of the Austrian Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs in the Governing Board (Chairman)

#### Wolfgang Wehapp

Representative of the City of Graz in the Governing Board



### Scientific Board

Elisabeth Abiri, Gothenburg

Florence Benoît-Rohmer, Strasbourg

Florian Bieber, Graz

Christina Binder, Munich

Christine Bräutigam, New York

Bojko Bučar, Ljubljana

Koen de Feyter, Antwerp †

Paolo di Stefani, Padova

Paul Gragl, Graz

Rainer Hofmann, Frankfurt

Walter Kälin, Bern

Dzidek Kedzia, Poznan/Geneva

Morten Kjærum, Lund

Benjamin Kneihls, Salzburg

Emma Lantschner, Graz

Jean-Paul Lehnens, Luxembourg

Peter Leuprecht, Montréal

Walther Lichem, Vienna

Lauri Mälksoo, Tartu

Joseph Marko, Graz

Vital Moreira, Coimbra

Manfred Nowak, Vienna

Barbara Oomen, Utrecht/Middelburg

Elina Pirjatanniemi, Abo/Turku

Martin Polaschek, Graz/Vienna

Wolf Rauch, Graz

Kurt Remele, Graz

Kirsten Schmalenbach, Salzburg

Alexander Sicilianos, Strasbourg

Elisabeth Staudegger, Graz

Alfred Stingl, Graz

Christian Strohal, Vienna

Engelbert Theuermann, Vienna

Helmut Tichy, Vienna

Daniel Thürer, Zurich

Silvia Ulrich, Linz

Anita Ziegerhofer, Graz

Leo Zwaak, Utrecht

#### Obituary to Koen de Feyter

It is with sadness that we had to learn about the sudden death of our Advisory Board member Prof. Koen De Feyter of the University of Antwerp. He was an outstanding academic and teacher with a life-long commitment to human rights. Koen de Feyter was devoted to human rights education, most prominently in the European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democracy, and to exploring music and arts in support of human rights education. He also spearheaded the idea of localizing human rights. His legacy will remain our inspiration.

## Staff

### **Wolfgang Benedek**

Professor Emeritus of International Law,  
UNI-ETC

### **Elias Faller**

Scientific staff and lecturer,  
UNESCO Chair

### **Nils Groß**

Scientific staff, UNESCO Centre

### **Sarah Hertwig**

Scientific staff and ACTION project,  
UNESCO Centre

### **Lisa Heschl**

Post-doctoral scientist and lecturer,  
UNESCO Chair

### **Isabella Meier**

Scientific staff and FRANET expert,  
UNESCO Centre

### **Markus Möstl**

Scientific staff and FRANET expert,  
UNESCO Centre

### **Livia Perschy**

Scientific staff and Clearinghouse, UNESCO  
Centre; Executive Office of the Human Rights  
Advisory Council of the City of Graz

### **Manuela Rusz**

Office management, UNI-ETC

### **Alexandra Stocker**

Management, UNESCO Centre; Executive  
Office of the Human Rights Advisory  
Council of the City of Graz

### **Wanda Tiefenbacher**

Scientific staff and stakeholder engagement,  
UNESCO Centre

### **Paul Jakob Walch**

Project officer “Kenne deine Rechte”

### **David Weiss**

Project officer “Kenne deine Rechte”;  
Executive Office of the Human Rights  
Advisory Council of the City of Graz

## Project Assistants at the UNESCO Chair

### **Svitlana Andreichenko**

International Humanitarian University, Odessa, Ukraine

## Teaching Assistants at the UNESCO Chair

### **Jetlinda Gjonaj**

### **Selina Nageler**

### **Sophia Urban**

## Human Rights Mandates

### **Wolfgang Benedek**

Member of the Human Rights Advisory Council of the City of Graz;  
Member of the Advisory Council of CURE (Campaign to Uphold Rights  
in Europe)

### **Lisa Heschl**

Member of the Monitoring Committee on the Rights of Persons  
with Disabilities of the Province of Styria

### **Isabella Meier**

Member of the Alliance “Living Without Violence” (Allianz gewaltFREI Leben);  
Member Advisory Board of the City of Graz for People with Disabilities

### **Markus Möstl**

Member of the Federal Commission for the Enforcement of Penalties and  
Measures (Austrian National Preventive Mechanism)

### **Gerd Oberleitner**

Member of the National Forum against Antisemitism;  
Member of the Austrian National Commission on International  
Humanitarian Law

### **Klaus Starl**

Member of the Human Rights Advisory Council of the City of Graz;  
Member of the Extremism Prevention Platform of the Province of Styria;  
Member of the Scientific Advisory Council of the European Coalition of Cities  
against Racism; Visiting Professor at the University of Padova

### **Alexandra Stocker**

Board Member of SPUNK – Association for Social Pedagogy and Culture  
(SPUNK – Verein für Sozialpädagogik und Kultur)

## Incoming Lecturers and Trainers

### Wolfgang Benedek

Professor Emeritus of International Law  
(UNI-ETC)

### Simone Philipp

Human rights education and organizational  
development trainer (UNESCO Centre)

### Christoph Pinter

UNHCR (UNI-ETC)

### Barbara Schmiedl

Human rights education trainer  
(UNI-ETC)

### Elisabeth Steiner

Former Judge of the European  
Court of Human Rights (ECHR);  
Incoming lecturer (UNESCO  
Chair)

## Visiting Researchers of UNESCO Chair and UNI-ETC

### Giulia dal Ben

University of Bologna, Italy

### Vanessa Sueli Cock

Javeriana University, Bogotá, Colombia

### Kamilla Galicz

Scuola Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy

### Wondemagegn Tadesse

Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

## Volunteers at the UNESCO Centre

### Abbaszade Balakhanin

### Berrit Englmayer

### Sindi Haskaj

### Ana Karolina Medeiros Fernandes

### Natalie Montenegro

## Merits

### Linda Rauter Prize

The Linda Rauter Prize is awarded for outstanding achievements by young lawyers in the context of their diploma thesis. This year, university assistant Elias Faller from the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC) received the award alongside five other prize-winners for his thesis entitled "From permanent stay to permanent temporariness: The Implications of the EU Temporary Protection Directive for International Refugee Law." We congratulate!

### Model United Nations: Outstanding Student Performances 2024

The law students Ali Tanrioever, Clara Zausinger, Dakota Zehler, Janberk Nak, Natalie Montenegro, Nikola Lewicka, and Sascha Pressnig received well-deserved awards for their successful participation in the 2024 edition of the Model Universal Periodic Review, a simulation of sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, organized by the Human Rights Centre of the University of Padova. Three awards for Best State under Review, Best Recommending State and Best National Human Rights Institution went to the University of Graz.



Ali Tanrioever, Clara Zausinger, Dakota Zehler, Janberk Nak, Natalie Montenegro, Nikola Lewicka, and Sascha Pressnig in Padova.

## Facts and Figures

**25** years of working for human rights

**21** staff members

**3** Toolkits for Equality published

**4** international cooperation projects accomplished

**19** cities advised

**22** learning videos for local authorities produced

**38** scientific board members

**28** Kenne deine Rechte journalistic articles published

**19** publications released

**124** events organised or attended

**3** action plans adoptions supported

**> 400** people reached through the Winter Academy



# FLAGSHIP STORIES



## Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments – 4<sup>th</sup> Academy and Conference “Human Rights Go Local: What Works”

From 5 to 8 February 2024, the fourth edition of the Academy and Conference “Human Rights Go Local: What Works” was convened. The Academy and Conference Series aim at demonstrating and synthesising innovative approaches and proven practices for protecting and promoting human rights at the local level, with the goal of making cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

This year’s Academy was titled “[Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments](#)”. The event gathered representatives of international organisations, local authorities, human rights practitioners from all relevant sectors and members of the next generation professionals to address the central role of local Human Rights Action Plans in promoting accountability. A total of 81 participants used their wealth of knowledge to exchange on the development and implementation of Human Rights Action Plans. They discussed practical aspects of anchoring human rights in local action plans, designing and implementing participatory processes for this purpose and ensuring effective monitoring of local Human Rights Action Plans. Through this collaborative dialogue and exchange, the Academy equipped local governments with the necessary tools to promote accountability effectively and efficiently.

The 5<sup>th</sup> volume of the [publication series “Human Rights Go Local”](#), entitled “Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments”, served as the Centre’s and Chair’s input on the topic of the Academy and was presented to the public. The new edition of this series explains how Human Rights Action Plans can make a real difference at the local level. It describes in a very practical way what local governments need to successfully develop and implement an action plan applying



Around 400 participants came together online and offline for the Closing Conference to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to discuss the Encouragements of the 2024 Outcome Document.



Keynote speaker Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, gave a keynote speech in which she reflected on 75 years of human rights treaties and their significance for the local level.

a human rights-based approach. The publication also provides examples of local authorities’ Human Rights Action Plans and describes key factors that are essential to strengthen the capacity of local governments to promote accountability.

As in previous years, the main output of the Academy was the adoption of an [Outcome Document](#). The Outcome Document is a collection of 14 encouragements with which the participants of the event aim to motivate local governments worldwide to adopt effective Human Rights Action Plans to strengthen their accountability. With the present Explanatory Remarks, we intend to facilitate the further use of the Outcome Document as reference point and instrument. We explain the meaning of all encouragements, link them to the preamble, present related findings of the plenary and workshop sessions of the 2024 Academy, and provide links to examples and relevant material presented or discussed during the Academy for further reading.



Keynote speaker Marc Cools, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, stressed the importance of seeing the protection of human rights not as an issue exclusively for central authorities.

The closing [Conference](#) took place on February 8, 2024. This year's hybrid Conference was hosted in the Styrian television studio of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF and was broadcasted live. A total of 50 invited guests from Austrian local authorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Austrian Association of Local Authorities, Academia and Graz-based Civil Society Organisations, as well as guests from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, UCLG Africa, UN-Habitat and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights attended the Conference in person at the studios, while an additional 350 attendees from 44 countries joined online.

A highlight of the Conference was the thought-provoking keynote speeches reflecting on 75 years of human rights treaties delivered by Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, via video message and [Marc Cools](#), President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, who attended in person.



The high-level panelists (from right to left): Elke Kahr (Mayor of Graz), Robert Lewis-Lettington (UN-Habitat), Pradeep Wagle (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), Helmut Tichy (facilitator, former Head of Department for International Law in the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs), Najat Zarrouk (African Local Governments Academy of UCLG Africa), Evein Obulor (European Coalition of Cities against Racism), and Alexander Lesigang (Austrian Association of Cities and Towns).



Organising the Human Rights Go Local Conference on February 8 was a highlight this year, teaching me that human rights must be embedded in both content and logistics. The technical team at the Styrian television studio of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation hosting the event showed exceptional dedication, realising our vision with creative solutions to ensure an engaging experience. I deeply appreciate finding committed allies in human rights work everywhere – partnerships like these truly elevate the impact of our human rights initiatives. **Livia Perschy**



Elliott King, Councillor of Swansea Council, gave practical insights into how Swansea City Council's Human Rights Action Plan thoroughly addresses accountability.

The heart of the event was the session dedicated to the Academy's Outcome Document and the exploration of Human Rights Action Plans and their role in promoting accountability at the local level. Facilitated by Helmut Tichy (former Head of Department for International Law in the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs), this high-level discussion featured a diverse panel of experts, including Elke Kahr (Mayor of Graz), Robert Lewis-Lettington (UN-Habitat), Pradeep Wagle (OHCHR), Najat Zarrouk (ALGA of UCLG Africa), Evein Obulor (ECCAR), and Alexander Lesigang (Austrian Association of Cities and Towns), alongside online discussants Elliott King (Councillor of Swansea Council, UK), Adele Dunstan (City of Swansea, UK), and Aly Raposo (City of Winnipeg, Canada). Their shared perspectives and practical insights illuminated the importance of capacity-building, networking, and sharing best practices in advancing the human rights agendas. The "Human Rights Go Local" Conference served as a beacon of hope and empowerment, showcasing the transformative potential of Human Rights Action Plans in promoting accountability and advancing human rights for all at the local level.



Adele Dunstan, City of Swansea, stressed the importance of capacity-building, networking, and sharing best practices in advancing the human rights agenda locally.



The 2024 Academy and Conference were organised by the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO and the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security in Graz, Austria, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the African Local Governments Academy (UCLG Africa), the Austrian Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs, the Federal Province of Styria, the City of Graz, and the University of Graz. The complete event is available to view online at [youtube.com/@humanrightsgolocal](https://youtube.com/@humanrightsgolocal).



*Building bridges: Elke Kahr shared her experiences as Mayor of Graz, the first human rights city in Europe, with representatives of the United Nations.*



*Around 50 invited guests from Austrian regional authorities, the Foreign Ministry, the Austrian Association of Municipalities, academia and Graz-based civil society organisations gathered in Graz to attend the high-profile programme on the topic of human rights action plans and accountability.*



*Renate Kicker, Chairwoman of the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels and Klaus Starl, Executive Director of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, jointly moderated the Conference.*



*Setting the scene: The 2024 Conference took place in a hybrid format in the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation's television studio in Styria, from where it was broadcasted live.*



*Conference manager Wanda Tiefenbacher in action during the live broadcast.*



*Facilitating implementation: Mohammed Alamer, the young head of programming at Paragraph-Software explaining the ICCAR City Reporting Tool.*



*Moderating exchange: Isabella Meier and Sarah Hertwig from the team of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels in lively discussions with representatives of the Council of Europe and the City of Graz.*

## Honouring Human Rights at the University of Graz

Upon initiative of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (UNI-ETC), the University of Graz awarded its 2024 Human Rights Prize to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) for its crucial work in documenting serious human rights violations in Belarus. This is a clear signal for justice and a democratic Europe.

The International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) was founded to document human rights violations and crimes against humanity in Belarus, so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice at a later stage. Since 2021, it has compiled 2,500 reports from victims and witnesses and identified perpetrators. IAPB is made up of several human rights NGOs, including DIGNITY - Danish Institute Against Torture, the Human Rights Center Viasna, Belarus, the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture, Belarus, with the support of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, Bellingcat, Truth Hounds, Human Rights Watch and OSCE.

For this achievement, the University of Graz awarded the organization the 2024 Human Rights Prize on 22 March 2024. Rector Peter Riedler said that “for a university, freedom of teaching and research is the highest good. Inseparably linked to this are values such as freedom from unlawful persecution, freedom of expression and the freedom to shape one’s life according to one’s own ideas.” The award signals the University’s commitment to human rights. In his laudatory speech, Wolfgang Benedek, whose recommendations as OSCE rapporteur on elections and human rights violations in 2020 contributed to the founding of the IAPB, recalled the atrocities committed in Belarus against peaceful protest. He said, “the International Accountability Platform for Belarus has set a standard for how this task can be accomplished and its work must therefore continue as long as necessary.” Rasmus Grue Christensen, Director of DIGNITY, Victoria Federova (International Committee for the Investigation of Torture) and Paulina K. (Viasna) accepted the award and highlighted the importance of the continued fight against oppression in Belarus and the importance of combating impunity.



Rector Peter Riedler (University of Graz), Paulina K. (Human Rights Center Viasna, Belarus), Rasmus Grue Christensen (CEO of DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture, IAPB Lead), Therese Rytter (Director of Prevention and Accountability, DIGNITY, IAPB), Victoria Fedorova (International Committee for the Investigation of Torture, Belarus, IAPB), Wolfgang Benedek (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy), © University of Graz/Vilgut.

## Contributing to Standard-Setting: Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development

At the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference, all 194 UNESCO Member States adopted the new Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. This document represents the only global standard-setting framework detailing how education can be harnessed to cultivate enduring peace and support human development through 14 guiding principles. As a non-binding guidance tool, it emphasizes the evolution of teaching and learning in the 21st century, aiming to establish lasting peace, reaffirm human rights, and encourage sustainable development amidst contemporary threats and challenges. The Recommendation recognizes that education – both in and out of schools – influences our perceptions of the world and our treatment of others, positioning it as a vital pathway to achieving lasting peace. It interconnects various thematic areas, including digital technology, climate change, gender issues, and fundamental freedoms, highlighting the need for positive changes across all these domains. Education is at the intersection of these factors, both shaping and being shaped by them. This document outlines the necessary changes in educational approaches and methods to achieve its goals. The newly adopted Recommendation updates the “1974” document, which nearly five decades ago united Member States in recognizing education as a crucial driver of peace and international understanding. Over the past two years, UNESCO has worked on revising this important tool (UNESCO).

On behalf of the Austrian government, UNESCO Chair Gerd Oberleitner participated (together with UNESCO Chair Hans Karl Peterlini of the University of Klagenfurt) as a legal expert in the intergovernmental negotiations on the revision of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Further information is available at [unesco.org/en/global-citizenship-peace-education/recommendation?hub=66535](https://unesco.org/en/global-citizenship-peace-education/recommendation?hub=66535)

The Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development, © UNESCO.





# STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION

## Stakeholder Cooperation

The UNESCO Centre and UNESCO Chair thank the following partners for their continued support and cooperation. As a result of this continuous collaboration, the impact and reach of the two Graz institutions could be significantly increased.



### **UNESCO**

UNESCO is a key partner in the implementation of both the UNESCO Centre's and the Chair's mandates and collaborates closely with the two organisations on a range of initiatives. UNESCO is represented by ADG Gabriela Ramos in the Governing Board of the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels and is co-organiser of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works." UNESCO Centre and Chair have been engaging with the International Coalition for Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR) for over fifteen years in various capacities.

The UNESCO Field Office Cairo partners with the UNESCO Centre and Chair on capacity-building for human rights in the Arab region, co-edits the Toolkit for Inclusive Cities in the Arab Region, and cooperates with the UNESCO Centre on the coordination of the Arab Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities.

### **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

UN-Habitat is a key stakeholder in the implementation of the Centre's mandate, and co-organiser of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works". In November, the Centre hosted a partner-led event at UN-Habitat's 12th session of the World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt, on "Localizing Human Rights".

### **United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is a crucial partner in the implementation of the Centre's mandate, and a co-organiser of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works".

### **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is a key stakeholder in the implementation of the Centre's mandate. The Congress is a co-organiser of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works".

### **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**

The FRA is a key stakeholder in the implementation of the Centre's mandate, and co-organiser of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works". ETC Graz serves as Austria's National Focal Point (NFP) in the FRANET research network.

### **Republic of Austria (Republik Österreich)**

The Republic of Austria is a founding party of the UNESCO Centre. The Republic's representative is chairman of the Governing Board of the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, and is a key partner in the realisation of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works".

### **Austrian Commission for UNESCO**

The Austrian Commission for UNESCO is the national coordination and liaison office for UNESCO. It advises the Austrian federal government, the federal states and other relevant bodies on all questions arising from Austria's membership in UNESCO and collaborates on the implementation of programmes and informs the public of UNESCO's work. It supports the UNESCO Chair and Centre.

### **Province of Styria, Austria (Land Steiermark)**

The Province of Styria is a founding party of the UNESCO Centre. The Province is represented in the Governing Board of the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, and is a key partner in the realisation of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works".

### **City of Graz, Austria (Stadt Graz)**

The City of Graz is a founding party of the UNESCO Centre. The City is represented in the Governing Board of the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels and is a key partner in the realisation of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works". The Human Rights City of Graz and its administration provide the foundation and support for a wide range of initiatives and projects of both institutions.

### **African Local Governments Academy (ALGA) of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)**

ALGA of UCLG Africa is a partner of the UNESCO Centre in the delivery of capacity-building activities. The Memorandum of Understanding between the UNESCO Centre and ALGA was established in 2017 to collaborate in the field of human rights and democracy at the local level through training and capacity-building for local and regional authorities in Africa. ALGA is a co-organiser of the Academy and Conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works".

### **European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR)**

ECCAR is a close partner of the UNESCO Centre, and collaborator in a range of activities relating to racism and discrimination at the local level. Klaus Starl, Director of the UNESCO Centre, has been a member of ECCAR's scientific advisory committee since 2004. In this capacity, he coordinates the committee's working group on the evaluation of city reports. The UNESCO Centre and ECCAR are partners in the EU-funded ACTION project on local level action plans against racism.

### **UNESCO Category 2 Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights in Buenos Aires, Argentina**

The Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights under the auspices of UNESCO is the Graz Centre's "sister organisation" in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The two Centres collaborate in terms of networking and global outreach.

### **World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF)**

The World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) is held annually in the human rights city of Gwangju, Republic of Korea, since 2011. It is a gathering place for human rights cities' officials, human rights organizations, activists and other stakeholders. Since 2020, together with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, the Chair organises a paper session on specific topics of human rights at the local level.

### **Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI)**

Since 2021, the UNESCO Centre and the UNESCO Chair have been working in partnership with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute to promote human rights at the local and regional level through joint initiatives such as capacity building, research, the development of a pool of human rights trainers, and staff exchanges.

### **World University Service Austria (WUS Austria)**

The long-standing institutional cooperation of the UNESCO Chair with the Austrian branch of the World University Service (WUS), an NGO active in project development and management, as well as consulting services in the field of the right to education, constantly brings forth joint activities in this area.

### **Global Campus of Human Rights (GCHR)**

The European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy coordinates the participation of the University of Graz in the European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation (E.MA) and contributes to the Global Campus of Human Rights with its eight regional human rights master's programmes.

### **Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI)**

The European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy is a member of the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI), a network of nearly 100 institutions and centres carrying out research and educational activities in the field of human rights.

### **UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, Democracy and Peace at the University of Padova**

Since 2026, the UNESCO Chairs at the Universities of Graz and Padova cooperate closely. Joint activities include teaching visits, conferences and academic events, research and collaboration in the Padova Model Universal Periodic Review and the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity, and Gender.

### **Scholars at Risk (SAR)**

Scholars at Risk works to protect threatened scholars and promote academic freedom around the world. The European Training and Research Centre is the liaison to SAR for the University of Graz.

### **ClimLaw: Graz**

ClimLaw: Graz is a research centre for climate law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Graz. The research centre's task is to critically observe and analyse current developments in climate law from the international, regional, and national perspective, and to conduct research projects focusing on climate and environmental law together with national and international partners from science and practice. The UNESCO Chair and ClimLaw: Graz concluded a cooperation agreement in November 2022 to align their academic and societal activities to further the protection of both the climate and human rights.

### **Paragraph Software GmbH**

Paragraph Software GmbH is a key supporter of the Centre in the implementation of the Centre's mandate. The company produces software for the legal sector, including secure communication between lawyers, courts and administration. The company provides the UNESCO Centre with internal administration and project management services, as well as online applications, and is involved in the implementation of projects requiring technical assistance. Paragraph Software and ETC Graz also cooperate in FRANET in respect to all matters of fundamental rights and the digitalisation of justice. It is the main donor of the online youth platform "Know Your Rights".



**RESEARCH AND  
MONITORING**

## Research and Monitoring

### Acting for Accountability: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments

The fifth volume of the “Human Rights Go Local” publication series (HRGL), edited by Gerd Oberleitner and Klaus Starl, “Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments”, examines the potential of Human Rights Action Plans for the promotion of human rights accountability at the local level and provides valuable answers to the questions: What is a local Human Rights Action Plan? What are benefits and limitations of local Human Rights Action Plans? How can a local Human Rights Action Plan best be developed, implemented, and evaluated? How can local governments promote accountability through Human Rights Action Plans? What impact do local Human Rights Action Plans have beyond the city border?



The fifth volume of the “Human Rights Go Local” publication series (HRGL).

By answering these questions, this volume explains how Human Rights Action Plans can make a real difference at the local level. It offers a profound step-by-step guidance for local authorities on the development, implementation, and evaluation of Human Rights Action Plans. In addition, relevant examples of Human Rights Action Plans and related initiatives by local governments and international organisations make the provided instruction more tangible. Further, readers gain important information on key factors that significantly contribute to strengthening local governments’ ability to promote their accountability by means of Action Plans, as well as on lessons learned in this regard by peers.

This volume aims to expand the current understanding on how to promote local governments’ accountability through Human Rights Action Plans in a practical way: The provided concrete suggestions and insightful examples can considerably support local governments in effectively and efficiently addressing the pressing challenges of our time.

The fifth volume contains contributions by UN-Habitat, the UNESCO International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Afadzato South District, the City of Barcelona, the City of Poti, the City of Reykjavik, the City of Swansea, and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

Information on the complete publication series is available at [humanrightsgolocal.org/resources/hrgl-publication-series/](http://humanrightsgolocal.org/resources/hrgl-publication-series/).

### Monitoring for the European Union: Multidisciplinary Research Network FRANET

ETC Graz serves as the Austrian National Focal Point (NFP) in the FRANET research network of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). In this role, ETC Graz conducts screening, fieldwork, and in-depth research on the fundamental rights compliance of Austria. In 2024, research was conducted on the topics of child protection systems, de-institutionalisation in the area of disabilities, environmental protection and due diligence, the management of external borders, the handling of mobile phones of asylum seekers, or the mapping of civic space in Austria.

Latest FRANET research analysed how the digitalisation of justice impacts the fundamental rights of individuals under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the work of justice professionals with respect to their ability to fulfil their fundamental rights obligations. ETC Graz carried out a total of 30 interviews. More information on the network and country-specific research is available at [fra.europa.eu](http://fra.europa.eu).

Further information on the work of the centre within the FRANET research network is available at [etc-graz.eu/aktivitaten/forschung/](http://etc-graz.eu/aktivitaten/forschung/).

### Exploring New Grounds: Human Rights Economy

Gerd Oberleitner, UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security, Markus Möstl, Senior Scientist at the UNESCO Centre and Klaus Starl, Director of the UNESCO Centre were invited to contribute to the publication project “Human Rights Economies and Subnational Governance: Theory and Practice” (Routledge 2025), edited by Martha F. Davis, Northeastern University School of Law, Morten Kjaerum, Raoul Wallenberg Institute/University of Aalborg, and Savitri Bisnath, Senior Economist with the OHCHR. The chapter examines the question of what theoretical and practical guidance there is for “human rights budgeting” and a “human rights-based budgeting approach” as a means of implementing a human rights economy at local level. In a first step, conceptual work and models dealing with this topic are reviewed. In a second step, related practices of local governments are mapped, and some key observations are derived. The findings from theory and practice are then brought together to determine first building blocks that outline the contours of “human rights budgeting” instruments at local level. Finally, some conclusions are drawn that support further research on how local governments can implement a human rights economy.

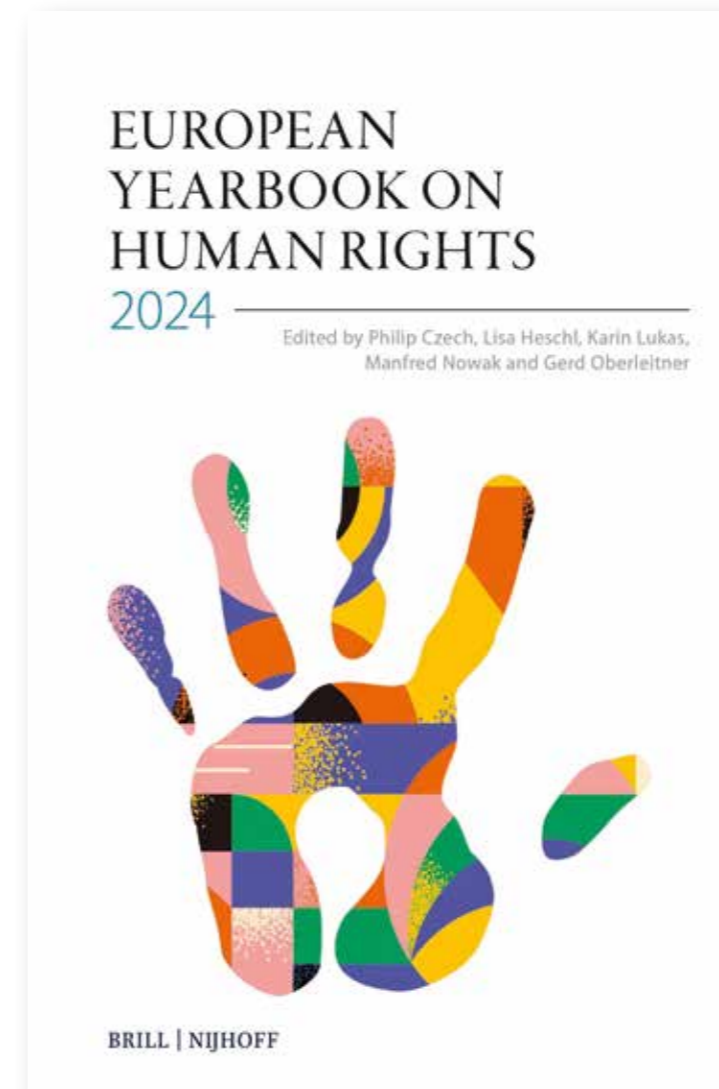
### Focusing on Europe: Yearbook on Human Rights 2024

The European Yearbook on Human Rights provides a platform for young and renowned scholars in the field of human rights and provides in-depth analysis, current information, and critical insights on key human rights issues in Europe and beyond. The 2024 edition covers a diverse array of topics, each addressing significant and contemporary human rights concerns. Contributions cover, among other things, the intersection of climate change and human rights as well as exploring legal frameworks, policy and juridical responses aimed at safeguarding environmental justice; the implications of AI on privacy, surveillance, and autonomy, emphasizing the need for robust regulatory mechanisms to protect individuals’ rights in the digital age; the recognition of same-sex parental rights and reproductive rights, cornerstones of gender equality examined through the lens of recent legislative changes and societal debates on non-discrimination; the relationship between business and human rights exploring the accountability mechanisms for corporate actions and the pursuit of sustainable and ethical business practices; the

rights of refugees and protection seekers and the urgent need for human-rights based approaches to new challenges and protection in the field of asylum and migration; the role of non-state entities in the protection of human rights and the potential of NGO’s to intervene in cases brought to human rights courts, just to name a few.

The European Yearbook on Human Rights is a joint publication by UNI-ETC, the University of Graz, the Global Campus of Human Rights, the Central European University, the Austrian Institute for Human Rights, the University of Salzburg, and the Vienna Forum for Democracy and Human Rights.

More information on the publication is available at [brill.com/display/title/70917](https://brill.com/display/title/70917).



*The European Yearbook on Human Rights 2024, © Brill.*





**CAPACITY  
BUILDING**

## Capacity Building

### Training, Consulting and Technical Support



#### Taking Local Action Plans against Racism to the Next Level: Project ACTION

In the frame of the ACTION project, funded by the European Commission within the CERV budget line, ETC Graz conducted seven training sessions with a total of 531 participants from 41 cities and 6 European institutions including the European Commission, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the Council of Europe. 19 municipalities have been directly consulted, 15 cities have developed an action plan or requested direct consulting to update existing action plans. Three cities have adopted an action plan by their city parliaments as an outcome of the ACTION project.

A total of 22 ACTION videos were produced. The ACTION videos were a central communication tool, helping to share insights and best practices. These videos were distributed via social media channels, expanding the project's visibility. By the end of 2024, the accounts reached 100,000 views. The videos had helped maintain the project's momentum by showcasing cities' successful anti-racism efforts.

The independent evaluator concluded her report: "By strengthening local capacity, encouraging collaboration, and providing a robust toolkit, the project has laid a strong foundation for cities to integrate antiracism initiatives into their governance structures."

Further information on the project is available at [eccar.info/en/ACTION](http://eccar.info/en/ACTION).

See [instagram.com/eccar\\_network/](https://www.instagram.com/eccar_network/) and [instagram.com/humanrightsgolocal/](https://www.instagram.com/humanrightsgolocal/) for ACTION videos on social media.

#### SCORE: Sporting Cities Opposing Racism in Europe

SCORE, with a project duration from 2022 to 2024, was a European Commission funded project to combat racism and discrimination in and through sports. It was implemented by a consortium of 15 partners in the six European countries Austria, France, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Sweden. The aim was to create a coalition of European cities, local authorities and organisations to promote inclusive sport and to prevent and combat racism, xenophobia and related intolerance in the field of sport. Since the start of the project, online webinars, trainings and workshops have been conducted, thereby increasing awareness, generating knowledge, and exchanging good practices at the local level on effective measures to combat discrimination and racism in and through sports.



*Bojan Brstina (Intercultural Cities of Sweden), Noemi Garcia-Arjona (University of Rennes 2), Nils Groß (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels), Manolis Chrysostalis (Municipality of Ioannina), Fahmeda Naheed (DORAS), Nuria Lores (Cidalia), and Carlos Nunez (Municipality of Getafe) at the final conference in Madrid, © OBERAXE.*

In March 2024, ETC Graz conducted an online webinar to launch the Strategic Planning Model for Local Authorities with more than 100 participants. In July, two further local workshops with 26 participants were held. The workshops at local level in Graz were designed to introduce and present the Manual to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in and through Sport at the Local Level and distribute it to the participants. In November of the same year, the final conference of the project took place at the Spanish Representation of the European Commission in Madrid. There, the project results were presented to an audience of political representatives, local actors and partners, country-specific differences were discussed, and experiences of the project's media ambassadors were exchanged.

Further information on SCORE is available on the project's website at [scoreproject.net](http://scoreproject.net).

The Strategic Planning Model publication is accessible at [scoreproject.net/materiales-de-interes-score/](http://scoreproject.net/materiales-de-interes-score/).



In 2024, I particularly remember the final conference of the project SCORE. With the completion of the project, which was implemented with a total of 15 partners in six European countries, we can look back on two successful project years in which we bridged social gaps, enhanced community resilience and strengthened the importance of sport as a tool for combating racism in and through sport. At the final conference in Madrid in November, all project partners and representatives from politics, local communities, social organisations and sports institutions came together to present the goals and achievements that especially highlight the need for projects like this. **Nils Groß**

## Developing a Society Aware of Racism

The city of Bregenz joined the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) and adopted a municipal action plan against racism for implementation as part of its accession. ETC Graz was commissioned to accompany this process and presented together with the municipal authority the action plan at the city hall. The action plan is based on ECCAR's 10 Points Plan of Action, which comprises ten fields of action. Politicians, administrators, experts, civil society and other stakeholders were invited to formulate measures in these fields of action. The measures include structural and selective measures, short-term and long-term measures as well as prevention and response. Awareness raising, capacity building, information and advice, innovation and evidence as well as enforcement measures are also addressed by the action plan. The programme was drawn up with the participation and involvement of various stakeholder groups, such as the administration and politicians, civil society, experts, multipliers, and particularly the Vorarlberg population.



*Klaus Starl (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels) and Sandra Schoch (Vice Mayor of Bregenz) at the press conference in Bregenz, © City of Bregenz.*



*Klaus Starl and Isabella Meier (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels) at the symposium "Eine rassismuskritische Gesellschaft," © Udo Mittelberger.*



In 2024, we were able to support more human rights city processes than ever before in the past 25 years. I was most pleased with the successful conclusion in Bregenz. In a comprehensive participation process, an action program for a city critical of racism was developed there. After initial reluctance, the program was finally unanimously adopted by the city council. **Klaus Starl**

## Innovating Democratic Participation at Local Level in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities commissioned the ETC Graz with the in-person intervention in its fourth meeting of the platform of exchange in the framework of the project "Innovating democratic participation at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina." Director Klaus Starl represented the Centre at the meeting taking place at Jahorina. In a first presentation, Starl demonstrated the relevance of human rights in relation to democracy and good governance at the local level, referring to current examples from all over the world. Melanie Lepoultier, spokesperson on human rights at the Congress, discussed specific examples leading to strengthened participation in municipalities as showcases for Bosnian municipalities to be considered for implementation. Starl then gave a presentation on good practices in European cities, implementing human rights action plans or developing the human rights city concept.

## Training Human Rights to Caritas Social Workers

On 12 and 19 April 2024, Markus Möstl, Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl conducted an online training course for a project manager from Caritas Austria.

The training included an introduction to the human rights system and human rights practice in Austria as well as four modules tailored to specific needs on the right to an adequate standard of living, children's rights, the prevention of violence and the rights of people with disabilities. In addition to the expert contributions from the trainers, there was sufficient space for reflection and discussion on specific individual topics. This made the training particularly relevant to the participant's specific area of work, which was also reflected in her extremely positive feedback. The training was carried out under the provision of the requirement of compliance with EU Regulation 2021/1060, Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), which requires knowledge, respect and implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities, when implementing a project financed under the EU's cohesion funding scheme.

## Building Capacities for Human Rights in Maó, Spain

In June 2024, a team of representatives of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) visited the Maó City Council to exchange best practices and provide training to political leaders, municipal staff and CSOs on actions aimed at combating racism and xenophobia. The team was formed by Marie-Paule N'Guessan (ECCAR office, Heidelberg, Germany), Simone Philipp (European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz, Austria) and Klaus Starl (Director of the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels). Mayor Héctor Pons received the delegation of the coalition, of which Maó has been a member since 2009. In a three-days working session, a draft Action Plan was developed and presented to the local government.



Mayor Héctor Pons, members of the Government with Simone Philipp and Klaus Starl.



Developing an Action Plan with Civil Society Actors, Managers of the Municipality and Political Leaders of Maó City Council.

## Engaging Cities for Developing Action Plans at ECCAR's General Assembly

"Don't Let Europe Go Backwards!" was the motto of this year's General Conference of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR), taking place from 22 to 25 September 2024 in Heidelberg. ETC together with the ECCAR, the city of Graz and the City of Heidelberg organized a workshop on the development of 10-Point-Plans of Action with about 100 participants from local authorities all over Europe. In this way, ETC Graz supported ECCAR in realising its mission to strengthen municipalities in playing their crucial role in combating racism, promoting diversity and ensuring equal opportunities at local level. Today, the ECCAR network of cities has almost 200 members from all over Europe. The city of Graz is one of the founding members of the coalition and has made a significant contribution to its development since its establishment.

## Human Rights Education and Training

### Promoting Academic Freedom in Ukraine

On 19 February 2024 the Erasmus+ Project "Promoting Academic Freedom in Ukraine (FreeAc)" had its official start. Bringing together project partners from Ukraine (International Humanitarian University (Odessa), Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and Sumy State University) with partners from Austria (University of Graz and World University Service Austria), Poland (Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań)), Italy (CESIE) and Greece (KMOP – Education and Innovation Hub), the project aims to mitigate the effects of the loss of talent and brain drain in Ukraine by strengthening inter-institutional cooperation with EU Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the freedom of the Ukrainian academia to research, learn, teach, and disseminate research outcomes. Furthermore, it supports the rebuilding of the Ukrainian higher education sector in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in line with its values. The project also aims to develop a post-war strategic outlook for an inclusive higher education sector to mitigate the negative impacts of war, talent loss, and brain drain.



Lisa Heschl (Scientist and lecturer at the UNESCO Chair at the University of Graz) and Svitlana Andreichenko (International Humanitarian University Odesa) at the presentation of the project in Vienna.

## Preventing Extremism at School by Human Rights Education

The “Extremismusprävention macht Schule II” initiative (Initiative to prevent extremism at school) aims to raise awareness of the dangers of ideologies of inequality among pupils at all levels and types of schools across Austria and strengthens their resilience to radicalization. Since the school year 2024/25, ETC Graz has been one of 77 providers throughout Austria for workshops that can be booked free of charge by schools and in course of AMS training and qualification measures. The workshops are dedicated to the topics of “Democracy, diversity, values and civil courage”, “Human rights, discrimination and prejudice sensitization”, as well as “Conflict resolution and violence prevention”. The following workshops are offered and can be booked:

- The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), a conference simulation with focus on the death penalty (Modules 1 and 2)
- “I wish I had said something ... !” – Strategies against regulars’ table slogans
- Don’t look away! – Action desired
- Civil courage – (Not) a cinch?

In 2024, a total of 5 workshops were already held.

## Discussing Digital Technologies in Migration and Asylum: AI at the Border

In a workshop organized at the University of Graz jointly by the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security with the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO, experts discussed the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in managing migration, in asylum procedures and at European borders, emphasizing the importance of human rights. The workshop was preceded by a meeting of the Expert Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence of the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO, meeting for the first time in Graz.



In my role at ETC, I have been at the forefront of collecting and analyzing data to inform evidence-based policy decisions and monitor human rights. This year, we took the opportunity to synthesize this expertise into a comprehensive guide on equality data for cities on behalf of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR). Working closely with the ECCAR, practical experience from member cities across Europe was incorporated to improve the applicability of the product for cities. I am proud of the result: it is a handbook that provides local authorities with diverse strategies for monitoring equality data, enabling them to better understand and support their communities. **Isabella Meier**

## Policy Toolkits

### The 10 Points Plan of Action against Racism of the Toolkit for Equality (TKE) Series

The ECCAR 10 Points Plan of Action provides a broad format, applicable to cities of different sizes. The action plan can be tailored to the issues and priorities faced by a city and is a commitment to implement at least one action in respect of each of the commitments. Each signatory city is free to choose the policies most relevant or most urgent. In 2024 the updated version of the 10 Points Plan of Action was published in German, English, French, Italian and Spanish.

Detailed information on the action plan is available at [eccar.info/en/10-point-action-plan](https://eccar.info/en/10-point-action-plan).

*Marie Paule N’Guessan holding the ECCAR 10 Points Plan of Action, © ECCAR.*



### Equality Data Collection of the Toolkit for Equality (TKE) Series

The Toolkit for Equality is a manual to support cities in implementing local policies that successfully counteract racism and racial discrimination or to support cities in improving existing ones. The Toolkit provides experience-based step-by-step instructions for implementing concrete policies, starting with the conceptualization and ending with measuring their impact.

The chapter “Equality Data Collection” provides a step-by-step guidance on mapping and collecting equality data. It is aware that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to equality data collection and considers local authorities’ level of knowledge and awareness on equality data (low or high) as well as the level of existing equality relevant data (collection or mapping and monitoring).

In the course of 2024, the chapter on equality data of the Toolkit for Equality was completed. Previously, the kick-off event of the ECCAR working group took place in May and finally the launch of the chapter “Equality Data Collection” at the ECCAR General Conference in Heidelberg, Germany took place in September.

The Toolkit is available on the coalition’s website at [eccar.info/en/eccar-toolkit-equality](https://eccar.info/en/eccar-toolkit-equality).

*Jana Christ holding the Toolkit for Equality on Equality Data Collection, © ECCAR.*





**FACILITATING  
THE EXCHANGE  
OF KNOWLEDGE**

## Facilitating the Exchange of Knowledge



### Building Bridges in a Multi-Level Governance Architecture: “Human Rights Go Local: What Works”

The Academy and Conference on human rights at the local level aim at sharing expertise on local human rights implementation leading to altered accountability for human rights at the local level. The International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels is a hub for knowledge and exchange. The Centre brings together practitioners, academics, members from civil society, institutions and other organisations, to harness expertise on local human rights and to translate insights into concrete policy recommendations. As an international platform, the Centre provides an arena for dialogue in the form of various events, programmes and initiatives.

From 5 to 8 February 2024, the fourth edition of the Academy and Conference “Human Rights Go Local: What Works” was convened online. Representatives of international organisations, local authorities, human rights practitioners from all relevant sectors and members of the next generation came together to address the central role of local human rights action plans in promoting accountability. A total of 81 participants exchanged on the development and implementation of human rights action plans. The Academy equipped local governments with the necessary tools to promote accountability effectively and efficiently.

The closing Conference took place on February 8, 2024. This year’s hybrid Conference was hosted in the Styrian television studio of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation and broadcasted live. A highlight was the thought-provoking keynote speeches by ADG Gabriela Ramos of UNESCO and Marc Cools, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. A total of 50 invited guests attended the Conference in person at the television studio, while an additional 350 attendees from 44 countries joined online.

As in previous years, the main output of the Academy was the adoption of an Outcome Document. It is a collection of 14 encouragements with which the participants of the event aim to motivate local governments worldwide to adopt effective human rights action plans to strengthen their accountability. A high-level panel of experts, including Elke Kahr (Mayor of Graz), Robert Lewis-Lettington (UN-Habitat), Pradeep Wagle (OHCHR), Najat Zarrouk (ALGA of UCLG Africa), Evein Obulor (ECCAR), and Alexander Lesigang (Austrian Association of Cities and Towns), alongside online discussants Elliott King (Councillor of Swansea Council, UK), Adele Dunstan (City of Swansea, UK), and Aly Raposo (City of Winnipeg, Canada) discussed the wealth of the Outcome Document for practice.

Further information is available at [humanrightsgolocal.org/events/academy-and-conference-series/](https://humanrightsgolocal.org/events/academy-and-conference-series/); the Outcome Document can be downloaded at [humanrightsgolocal.org/resources/publications/](https://humanrightsgolocal.org/resources/publications/).

## Launching the Equality Data Collection Toolkit

“Don’t Let Europe Go Backwards!” was the motto of this year’s General Conference of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) from 22 to 25 September in Heidelberg. Alongside partners from civil society, local authorities and international organisations, ETC Graz took part in the 20th anniversary conference and communicated the results of its work to the target groups. Together with ECCAR, ETC Graz presented the new chapter on Equality data Collection of the Toolkit for Equality and organized a workshop on the development of 10-Point-Plans of Action with about 100 participants. In this way, ETC Graz supported ECCAR in realising its mission to strengthen municipalities in playing their crucial role in combating racism, promoting diversity and ensuring equal opportunities at local level. Today, the ECCAR network of cities has almost 200 members from all over Europe. The city of Graz is one of the founding members of the coalition and has made a significant contribution to its development since its establishment.



Isabella Meier (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels) presenting the Toolkit for Equality’s chapter on equality data collection at the General Conference 2024, © Joe Pohl.



Danijel Benjamin Cubelic (Vice President of ECCAR), Stefanie Jansen (Mayor of Heidelberg), Alexandra Stocker (representing the Mayor of Graz, Elke Kahr) and Klaus Starl (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels), and Benedetto Zacchioli (President of ECCAR).



A highlight for me this year was attending the General Assembly of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) in Heidelberg, under the theme “Don’t let Europe go backwards.” ETC Graz has been involved in the ECCAR process from the very beginning, and it was truly inspiring to witness how the coalition has progressed over the past 20 years. The excellent work of the secretariat stands out, as does the remarkable fact that nearly 200 cities are now committed to fighting racism.

It is also encouraging to see the substantial shift in awareness within cities, where the existence of racism is now explicitly acknowledged. Only by recognizing and naming these challenges can anti-racism policies be effectively tailored and implemented. Today, there is a much stronger commitment to addressing these issues than there was two decades ago. This is a hopeful sign and highlights the importance of sustained, dedicated efforts in this area. **Alexandra Stocker**

**Localizing Human Rights for Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities that Leave No One and No Place Behind: Panel Discussion at the 12<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, Egypt**

During the 12<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum in Cairo in November 2024, an inspiring partnered event was hosted by the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, along with UN-Habitat, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the African Local Government Academy (ALGA) of United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLG Africa). The event, titled “Localizing Human Rights for Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities that Leave No One and No Place Behind”, was a vibrant exchange of examples of human rights-based local action. Leaders, politicians, technical experts, and civil society members at the local, national, and international levels shared their visions, strategies, approaches, innovations, and good practices for localizing human rights in sustainable cities and communities.



Isabella Meier (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels) with high-level panellists at the World Urban Forum.



This year has been a gratifying experience, as I've had the chance to work closely with our municipal and international partners who are dedicated to advancing the human rights agenda at the local level. I've appreciated the many opportunities to engage in valuable discussions on the important issues surrounding the human rights economy and the accountability of human rights cities during personal exchanges with representatives from cities and international organizations. Our 'Human Rights Go Local' Academy and Conference and the visit of a delegation from the Finnish Ministry of Justice to Graz were particularly memorable, as was my personal involvement in the World Human Rights City Forum in Gwangju, South Korea. **Markus Möstl**

**Scrutinizing Civic Space and Human Rights Cities at the 14<sup>th</sup> World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) in Gwangju, Republic of Korea**

The City of Graz was represented by the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels and the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security at the University of Graz at this year's World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF), which took place in Gwangju, Republic of Korea in October 2024. Jointly organised by the UNESCO Chair and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Lund, and the Chonnam University, Gwangju, a human rights paper session on „Civic Space and Human Rights Cities“ was held on 10 and 11 October 2024.

During the two-day exchange with representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNESCO, the global association of local authorities – the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), cities and other stakeholders, it was once again confirmed that Graz sets international standards as a human rights city and plays a pioneering role globally in this regard. The valuable experience of the City of Graz was highlighted in particular by a representative of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea.



Plenary session at the World Human Rights Cities Forum, © Markus Möstl.



Speaker Gerd Oberleitner (UNESCO Chair) at the Human Rights Paper Session in Gwangju, © Markus Möstl.



## Discussing Human Rights in a Polarized World at the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI) Meeting in Lund, Sweden



UNESCO Chair Gerd Oberleitner represented the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz at the annual Conference of the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI) in Lund in September 2024. The Conference discussed human rights in a polarized world and the realization of human rights in the green and just transition.

*"Human Rights in a Polarized World."*

## Exchanging Views: Finnish Government Delegation at the UNESCO Centre

In June 2024, the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels welcomed a delegation from the Finnish Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Justice, and Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. The purpose of the visit was to exchange expertise and experiences in preventing racism and advancing human rights at the local level.

The participants engaged in an insightful exchange on the Good Relations Model currently applied in Finland, the work by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), and the benefits of a multi-level governance approach to anti-discrimination policies at the municipal level. Following this, the delegation met with key local stakeholders in anti-discrimination work, who are members of the Human Rights City Council of Graz. In a lively discussion moderated by Isabella Meier, Senior Scientist at the UNESCO Centre, the participants exchanged their experiences and successful practices for preventing various forms of discrimination at the local level. The visit concluded with a meeting at the City Hall, where Mayor Elke Kahr and City Councillor for Integration Robert Krotzer discussed workplace discrimination, diversity in the job market, and housing policies with the delegation.



*The Finnish Government Delegation in Graz,  
© City of Graz/Fischer.*

## Academic Cooperation in Teaching

### Studying Human Rights at the University of Graz

The UNESCO Chair provides comprehensive undergraduate and postgraduate educational programs, offering courses ranging from elementary to advanced levels in human rights and human security, aligned with UNESCO's Education 2030 Strategy. Students gain hands-on experience through participation in the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition (previously known as European Human Rights Moot Court), the UN Model Universal Periodic Review, and a Human Rights Debate Club. Students from the law faculty and all other disciplines at the University of Graz, including international students, develop skills to contribute to a more just, equal, peaceful, and sustainable society as responsible global citizens, understand the ethical dimensions of human development, and participate actively in democratic processes. The UNESCO Chair enhances legal and social sciences master's programmes through specialized courses, lecture series, and workshops, provides thesis supervision at both diploma and master's level, and delivers online learning opportunities. Additionally, it oversees the University of Graz's Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity and Gender. In collaboration with the UNESCO Centre, the Chair facilitates academic exchange through its Visiting Researchers Programme, promoting international mobility among human rights students and researchers and maintains active partnerships with other UNESCO Chairs and participates in the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI). It represents the University of Graz as Inner Circle partner university of the European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation (E.MA) and hosts several students from the programme every year.



The UNESCO Chair offers a comprehensive selection of human rights courses, suitable for undergraduate as well as postgraduate students. Law students and students of various master's degrees at the University of Graz can choose from courses on general human rights, humanitarian law or refugee law, to name but a few. Moreover, human rights education at the Centre has a practical focus, including the participation of practitioners in the courses and the use of interactive and participatory teaching methods, such as a debate club format or a moot court. **Elias Faller**

## Creating Human Rights Cities in the Human Rights City Lab at the University of Padova, Italy



Signpost to the Human Rights City Lab.

Why should local authorities engage with human rights? In the Human Rights City Lab, participants set up human rights cities. Thereby, they planned and negotiated in different capacities and by taking up different stakeholder roles and responsibilities. After having identified specific issues to be tackled, participants were enabled to relate them to human rights and search for adequate solutions. During negotiations among stakeholders, all options for political actions were evaluated according to their human rights impact applying recognized methods of human rights assessment instruments, such as the human rights-based approach, proportionality concept or the 4A-scheme. Participants were trained in planning policies applying the human rights-based approach to social transformation and on how to introduce local institutions guaranteeing accountability for human rights: What can human rights cities contribute to social transformation, equality and justice?

## Valuing a Global Civil Society

The UNESCO Chair co-organised and participated in the International Conference “Global Civil Society’s value and law power facing a crisis of values and law. Ideas and actions to shape an international order of peace” at the University of Padova, 11-12 November 2024. The conference discussed the current state of health of transnational bottom-up actions, proposals and strategies to support the multilateral regimes for international human rights law, international democracy, and peace, their norms, values and institutions.



Participants at the conference in Padova.

## Researching Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity and Gender

The Doctoral Programme Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity and Gender traditionally holds a workshop day at the Global Campus in the Monastery of San Nicolò, Venice Lido. Also, this year, on 14 June, PhD students at the University of Graz met with colleagues from the Human Rights Center Antonio Papisca of the University of Padova, presented their research and were engaged in fruitful discussions. The range of research topics presented was broad: Presentations on defensive speech on social media platforms in times of war, transformative justice in Colombia or cyber violence against women filled a long and intense day. Besides, participants could enjoy the warm weather in the lovely city of Venice.



Elias Faller, Gerd Oberleitner and Wolfgang Benedek with participants of the doctoral programme.

## Advancing Human Rights Education in Higher Education: Research, Practice, Impact

The UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security organized jointly with the European Master’s Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation a two-day workshop on advancing human rights education at universities.

## UNESCO Chair as Visiting Professor

In January 2024, Prof. Gerd Oberleitner was Visiting Professor at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, to engage in a discussion with students in a seminar on human security and international law. In March 2024, Oberleitner was Visiting Professor at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, teaching a class on contemporary challenges to international human rights law in the University’s Transitional Law Course. He also taught classes in the European Master’s Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation (Venice), the European Master’s Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation in South-East Europe (Sarajevo), and the European Master’s Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation in Latin-America and the Carribean (Buenos Aires).

## Visiting Researchers at the UNESCO Chair

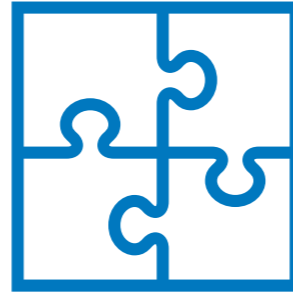
In 2024, UNI-ETC welcomed three visiting researchers. Pavlo Burdiak, PhD researcher from the Center for Democracy and the Rule of Law in Kyiv, Ukraine. His research focuses on content moderation on social platforms, and the use of social media platforms in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Wondemagegn Tadesse Goshu, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, who’s research interests lie in the areas of international relations, international law and constitutional law. And Giulia Dal Ben, PhD researcher at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Bologna. She researches in the field of environmental migration and the concept of vulnerability.



**LABS!**

## LABS!

The Human Rights Lab comprises all activities, mostly in Graz and Styria, which serve to research and test methodologies of human rights implementation or monitoring. Findings serve as input for measures that can be applied elsewhere. Further, the LABS! encompasses measures carried out for or on behalf of the city and the region. These include activities of the “Experts’ committee of the Province of Styria” and the “Human Rights Advisory Council” of the city of Graz.



### Monitoring Human Rights at Local Level: The Human Rights Report of the City of Graz

The ETC Graz serves as the Municipal Human Rights Advisory Council’s Executive Office in the Human Rights City of Graz. As such, it coordinates several of the Council’s working groups, including the group responsible for preparing the City’s Human Rights Report. The Human Rights Report of the City of Graz examines developments, good practices and challenges related to the realisation of human rights in Graz. The 2024 Human Rights Report is an evaluation report focusing on recommendations developed in the previous year and addressed to the City Government and Council. These recommendations pertain to digital service offerings under the city’s E-Governance framework, measures against domestic violence, political participation of children and youth, promotion of linguistic diversity in the city, and efforts to combat racism. Relevant municipal departments, political representatives, and institutions were consulted. Based on their feedback, the report provides an update on the extent to which these recommendations have been implemented and highlights the challenges encountered during the process.

The report was presented to the City Council of Graz. The English language version of the report is available at [graz.at/cms/beitrag/10152653/7771447/menschenrechtsberichte\\_der\\_stadt\\_graz.html#](https://graz.at/cms/beitrag/10152653/7771447/menschenrechtsberichte_der_stadt_graz.html#).

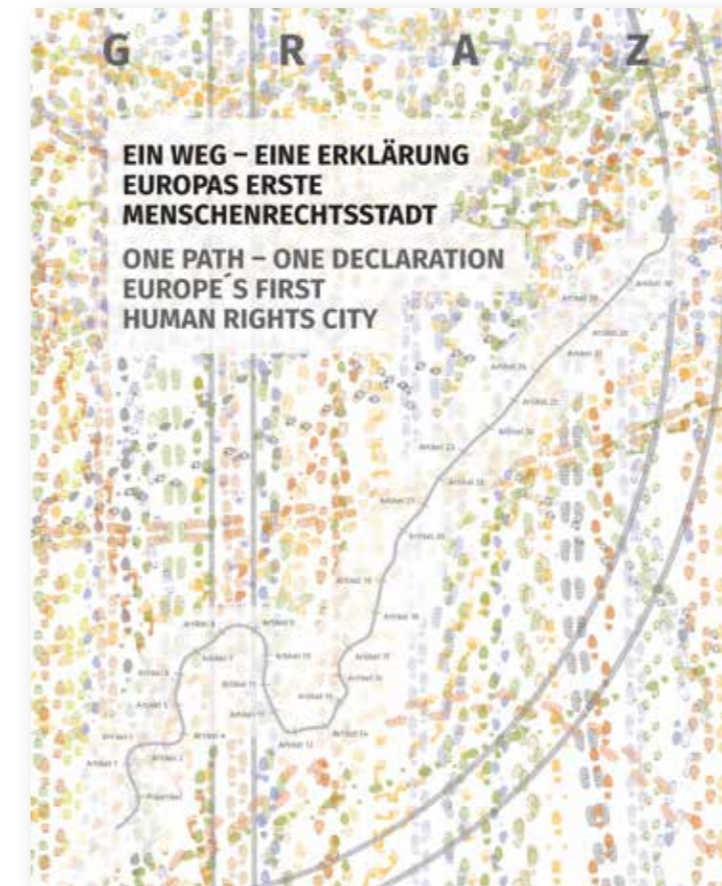


*Klaus Starl (International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels) and Elke Lujansky-Lammer (Chairperson of the Human Rights Advisory Council) at the presentation of the report at the City Council, © City of Graz/Fischer.*

## In Search of the Culture of Human Rights in Graz

The human rights book “Graz: One Path – One Declaration: Europe’s First Human Rights City” is a collaborative project by ETC Graz, the Human Rights Advisory Council of the City of Graz, and the Peace Office Graz, commissioned by the City of Graz. It explores Graz’s transformation into Europe’s first Human Rights City, following its 2001 declaration. By highlighting the interconnected history of global human rights and local governance, the book examines how abstract principles have been translated into concrete practices and whether a true spirit and culture of human rights have taken root in the city.

This exploration is achieved through three chapters, each illuminating key aspects of Graz’s human rights journey. The first focuses on the Human Rights Prize, which recognises initiatives fostering tolerance, dialogue, and reconciliation, with 26 laureates who have shaped municipal life. The second examines the Human Rights Report, particularly its focus chapters introduced in 2007, which connect pressing issues to a broader human rights culture. The third chapter traces the city’s historical journey from 1948 to 2001, emphasising civic participation, artistic expression, and reconciliation as pillars of Graz’s human rights legacy.



*One Path – One Declaration: Europe’s First Human Rights City, © City of Graz.*

## Know Your Rights: 15 Years Online Engagement Platform for Young People (Kenne deine Rechte)

“Kenne deine Rechte” (Know Your Rights) is the Human Rights Advisory Council’s online youth participation platform. It not only allows young people aged 14 to 24 to report on human rights issues that affect or interest them, but it also aims to inform the readers about current human rights issues. The main financial supporters are the City of Graz, the Province of Styria, Paragraph-Software GmbH and Energie Graz. While participants are independent and write about subjects of their own choosing, they are supported with input, if necessary, to assist their production of journalistic media. “Kenne deine Rechte” is mostly focused on publishing journalistic articles, however as the media landscape has changed dramatically over the last years, the project also produces content, such as videos, podcast episodes or social media postings. Moreover, the project offers many opportunities to attend human rights events and engage with the topic. The 15<sup>th</sup> project cycle (2024/25) has 15 motivated participants spread across Austria. “Weltverbessern für Anfänger:innen” (Improving the World for Beginners) is the project’s own podcast which will reach the benchmark of 50 episodes this year. To celebrate the success of the project year, participants were invited to the Graz City Hall to receive their certificates of participation in September 2024.

More information on the project’s outcomes is available at [kennedeinerechte.at](https://kennedeinerechte.at).



Alexandra Stocker and Paul Walch with participants of the 15<sup>th</sup> project cycle, Elke Lujansky-Lammer and Max Aufischer (of the Human Rights Advisory Council), and Mayor Elke Kahr.

## Quality Assurance for Human Rights at Local Level

This new project aims to identify the most important quality assurance mechanisms and instruments related to human rights that are currently used by cities and municipalities worldwide. The main practices used at local and international level were mapped through desk research and may serve as indicators for qualifying Human Rights Cities.

The results of the mapping provide an overview of the main actors, the issues addressed, and the practices used, and subsequently support the development of a mechanism to improve the accountability of local authorities worldwide.

The mapping was completed in June 2024. Since then, the conceptualisation of the next steps for an instrument to improve the accountability of local authorities regarding human rights has been underway.



The project “Know Your Rights” has now been in existence for 15 years. Although all the participants from the first hour have moved on, the commitment of everyone involved has remained the same. To coincide with the anniversary, 15 young people are working closely together to raise awareness of human rights issues around the world and explore the topic through multimedia journalism. Their results vary from standalone articles to a series of podcast episodes. For me personally, it is a pleasure to work with this young and committed team, as I used to be a part of it myself. It fills me with great joy to be able to contribute to a different kind of work!

**Paul Jakob Walch**



**EVENTS  
WORKSHOPS  
LECTURES**

## Events, Workshops, Lectures



10 January 2024	Lecture "Gibt es ein Menschenrecht auf Asyl?" at the University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl)
11 January 2024	Lecture "Bewaffnete Konflikte und das Völkerrecht – aktuelle Herausforderungen" at Wirtschaftspolitische Akademie, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
15 January 2024	Lecture "Human Rights in Europe – European Court of Human Rights," Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Latin-America and the Caribbean (Gerd Oberleitner)
19 January 2024	Global Studies Students Day at the University of Graz, presentation of the UNESCO Centre and its opportunities, Graz, Austria (Isabella Meier)
23 January 2024	Expert meeting Province of Styria, Graz, Austria (Klaus Starl)
25 January 2024	Workshop discussion "Wohnen für alle! Diskriminierungsfreier Zugang zu Wohnraum" at the Folklore Museum, Graz, Austria (ETC Graz)
25 January 2024	European stakeholder discussion SCORE, online (Wanda Tiefenbacher)
26 January 2024	Global Campus of Human Rights Assembly, online (Gerd Oberleitner)
29-30 January 2024	Doctoral seminar and master's programme on human security and international law at the Faculty of Law, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden (Gerd Oberleitner)
30 January 2024	Lecture "Die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderung und die Tätigkeit des Steiermärkischen Monitoringausschuss für die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderung" at the University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl)
31 January 2024	Expert meeting on human rights cities, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, online (Markus Möstl)
5-8 February 2024	Academy and conference "Human Rights Go Local: What Works – Accountability in Action: Human Rights Action Plans of Local Governments," Graz, Austria (UNESCO Centre and UNESCO Chair)
15-17 February 2024	Regional round Helga Pedersen Moot Court at the University of St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland (Gerd Oberleitner and Sophia Urban)
16 February 2024	Founding conference Human Rights Alliance, Vienna, Austria (Markus Möstl)
16 February 2024	Human rights consulting City of Düren, Germany, online (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
29 February 2024	Kick-off meeting of the project "FreeAc: Promoting Academic Freedom in Ukraine," online (Lisa Heschl)
4 March 2024	General assembly of the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, online (ETC Graz)

7 March 2024	Human rights consulting City of Leipzig, Germany, online (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
7 March 2024	Final Enquete on the exhibition "Jetzt im Recht! Wege zur Gleichbehandlung" at the Folklore Museum, Graz, Austria (Livia Perschy and Klaus Starl)
11-12 March 2024	Fundamental Rights Forum 2024, Vienna, Austria (Markus Möstl, Klaus Starl and Wanda Tiefenbacher)
12-14 March 2024	Transnational law course "International humanitarian law: contemporary challenges" at the Faculty of Law, University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium (Gerd Oberleitner)
18-20 March 2024	Symposium on anti-racism, Bregenz, Austria (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
20 March 2024	Conference on anti-racism, Graz, Austria (Alexandra Stocker)
22 March 2024	Awarding of the Human Rights Prize of the University of Graz and symposium "Fact Finding in and Documentation of Human Rights," Graz, Austria (UNI-ETC)
26 March 2024	SCORE webinar on dissemination of "Strategic Planning Model," online (Klaus Starl and Wanda Tiefenbacher)
3 April 2024	Executive Committee, European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
12 April 2024	Human rights training Caritas, online (Markus Möstl and Klaus Starl)
18 April 2024	Executive Committee, European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
19 April 2024	Human rights training Caritas, online (Isabella Meier and Markus Möstl)
21 April 2024	Lecture "Introduction to Refugee Law," ERMA Programme at the University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Lisa Heschl)
23 April 2024	Lecture "New threats to human security in the Anthropocene" at the University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
24 April 2024	Lecture "Violence against Women and Domestic Violence," Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), Graz, Austria (Helmut Tichy and Olena Kharytonova)
26 April 2024	Brownbag Seminar with Daniela Copetti Cravo at the UNESCO Centre, Graz, Austria (Isabella Meier, Markus Möstl and Klaus Starl)
27 April 2024	Teambuilding workshop, "Know Your Rights," Graz, Austria (David Weiss)
29-30 April 2024	Conference "Humanity at the Crossroads: Autonomous Weapons Systems and the Challenge of Regulation," Vienna, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
4 May 2024	Workshop on journalism, "Know Your Rights," Graz, Austria (David Weiss)
6 May 2024	SCORE webinar on dissemination of "Manual to Combat Racism and Discrimination in and through Sport at Local Level," online (Nils Groß and Wanda Tiefenbacher)
6 May 2024	High-level panel against antisemitism, Federal Chancellery, Vienna, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)

6-7 May 2024	Capacity building on developing Action Plans and ACTION steering board meeting, City of Botkyrka, Botkyrka, Sweden (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
8 May 2024	Lecture with Emma Lantschner, Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, "Protecting Minority Rights in Europe," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
13 May 2024	Public lecture with William O'Neill, UN Expert on Human Rights in Haiti, "Let's talk about Haiti! Restoring peace and human rights in a collapsing state," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
14 May 2024	"Nationale Kommission zur Umsetzung des humanitären Völkerrechts," Vienna, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
15 May 2024	Photo exhibition and workshop with Stephanie de la Barra and Jasmin Diab, "Lebanon in a state of unrest," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Elias Faller)
16 May 2024	Kick-off meeting on equality data, European Coalition of Cities against Racism, online (Isabella Meier)
21 May 2024	Expert support platform of exchange, Council of Europe, online (Isabella Meier and Markus Möstl)
22 May 2024	Lecture "The International Committee of the Red Cross in Armed Conflict and Disaster," Austrian Red Cross, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
22 May 2024	Lecture with Pavlo Burdiak, "Defending Human Rights Online in Times of War – Freedom of Expression, Disinformation, and Hate Speech on Social Media," Centre for Democracy and the Rule of Law (Ukraine), University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
23 May 2024	SCORE webinar on combating racism in and through sports, online (Nils Groß)
23 May 2024	World Café to update civic society on the 10 PPA, Graz, Austria (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
25-26 May 2024	High-level conference on the state of human rights, Global Campus of Human Rights, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
29 May 2024	World Café to update civic society on the 10 PPA, Graz, Austria (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
2-6 June 2024	Capacity building City of Maó, Maó, Spain (Klaus Starl)
8 June 2024	"Know Your Rights" "im offenen Salon" at Schauspielhaus Graz, Graz, Austria (David Weiss)
10 June 2024	Lecture with Veronica Gómez, Judge at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Buenos Aires/San José, "The Inter-American Court of Human Rights," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
10-11 June 2024	Arqus Collaboration Project Lab "Implementing academic freedom for responsible internationalisation in Arqus," University of Padova, Padova, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner and Sophia Urban)
11 June 2024	10 <sup>th</sup> Language Forum Graz, Graz, Austria (Livia Perschy)
13-14 June 2024	Visit of Finnish Government Delegation at the UNESCO Centre, Graz, Austria (UNESCO Centre)
14 June 2024	Capacity building on the relevance of human rights at local level with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Klaus Starl)
14 June 2024	Joint International PhD Workshop "Human Rights, Democracy, Diversity and Gender," Venice, Italy (Elias Feller, Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
17 June 2024	Workshop "Good Practices in the Field of Higher Education in Ukraine," OeAD, Vienna, Austria (Lisa Heschl)
17 June 2024	Awarding of the Linda Rauter Award for Elias Faller, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Elias Faller)

17-19 June 2024	Meeting of the German-speaking cities of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, Ingelheim, Germany (Isabella Meier)
19 June 2024	Lecture with Karin Rowhani-Wimmer, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CPT), "Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
21 June 2024	Human rights Action Plan, consulting for the City of Vienna, online (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
24-25 June 2024	Executive Committee, European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Padova, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
25 June 2024	SCORE webinar on combating racism in and through sports, online (Nils Groß)
25-28 June 2024	81 <sup>st</sup> ILA Conference "International Law in a fluid world," 2024 Biennial Conference of the International Law Association, Athens, Greece (Gerd Oberleitner)
26 June 2024	FairStyria-Tag "Faire Lebensbedingungen für alle," Graz, Austria (Livia Perschy and Klaus Starl)
26 June 2024	Lecture with Claude d'Estree, Joseph Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver, "Climate Change and Migration," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
28 June 2024	Executive Committee, European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
3 July 2024	SCORE stakeholder workshop on dissemination of "Manual to Combat Racism and Discrimination in and through Sport at Local Level," Graz, Austria (Nils Groß and Klaus Starl)
4 July 2024	56 <sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council "Capacity building for local governments to realize human rights for all," online (Markus Möstl)
15 July 2024	SCORE stakeholder workshop on dissemination of "Manual to Combat Racism and Discrimination in and through Sport at Local Level," Graz, Austria (ETC Graz)
24 July 2024	Capacity building City of Nuremberg, Germany, online (Klaus Starl)
16 August 2024	Multi-stakeholder meeting on the resolution of local governments and human rights, online (Isabella Meier)
9 September 2024	Governing Board meeting Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, Graz, Austria (Klaus Starl)
13-14 September 2024	Annual Conference of the Association of Human Rights Institutes "Human Rights in a Polarized World – Realizing Human Rights in the Green and Just Transition," Lund, Sweden (Gerd Oberleitner)
14 September 2024	Lecture "The Legal Framework for the Protection of Refugees," European Master's in Migration and Intercultural Relations, University of Oldenburg, Oldenburg, Germany (Lisa Heschl)
19-22 September 2024	Graduation of the European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
17 September 2024	Certificate award ceremony "Know Your Rights" at the city hall, Graz Austria (Alexandra Stocker and Paul Walch)
20 September 2024	SCORE webinar on combating racism in and through sports, online (Nils Groß)
23 September 2024	Anniversary panel on 20 years ECCAR, Heidelberg, Germany (Klaus Starl)
23-25 September 2024	ECCAR General Conference 2024 "Don't Let Europe Go Backwards!", Heidelberg, Germany (Isabella Meier, Klaus Starl and Alexandra Stocker)
24 September 2024	Panel discussion on equality data collection, Heidelberg, Germany (Isabella Meier)



2 October 2024	Lecture "Was sind Menschenrechte?", University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Lisa Heschl)
3 October 2024	Opening of the new premises of the Styrian Ombuds Office for Children and Youth (kija), Graz, Austria (Alexandra Stocker)
10 October 2024	Human Rights Paper Session at the 14th World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF), jointly organized with RWI, Lund, Sweden and Chonnam University Gwangju, Gwangju, Republic of Korea (Gerd Oberleitner)
10-11 October 2024	14 <sup>th</sup> World Human Rights Cities Forum (WHRCF) "Civic Space and Human Rights Cities," Gwangju, Republic of Korea (Markus Möstl)
11-13 October 2024	Nuremberg Forum 2024 "For Every Child, Protecting Children's Rights in Armed Conflict," Nuremberg Academy, Nuremberg, Germany (Gerd Oberleitner)
14 October 2024	SCORE webinar on combating racism in and through sports, online (Nils Groß)
14 October 2024	Capacity building and stakeholder workshop, Nuremberg, Germany (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
22 October 2024	Human rights walk, Graz, Austria (Klaus Starl)
23 October 2024	Human rights workshop on civil courage, Oberwart, Austria (Klaus Starl)
30 October 2024	Final SCORE webinar on achievements of the project, online (Nils Groß)
30 October 2024	Capacity building City of Herford, Germany, online (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
5 November 2024	City reporting and online-lecture on the aggregated results of 32 city reports in the framework of ECCAR, Heidelberg, Germany (Klaus Starl)
6 November 2024	Capacity building and developing human rights Action Plans in the City Council of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany (Klaus Starl)
4-8 November 2024	12 <sup>th</sup> Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12), Cairo, Egypt (Isabella Meier)
5 November 2024	Panel discussion "Localizing Human Rights for Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities that Leave No One und No Place Behind," Cairo, Egypt (Isabella Meier)
7-8 November 2024	Lecture "Introduction to international human rights law," European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation in South-East Europe, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Gerd Oberleitner)
11 November 2024	Panel discussion "A multi-level governance of resilience: civil society and local governments for the promotion of peace and human rights," at the conference "Global Civil Society's Value," jointly organized with the University of Padova, Padova, Italy (Lisa Heschl and Gerd Oberleitner)
13 November 2024	Meeting with the UNESCO Network of Experts on AI and the Rule of Law, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (UNI-ETC)
13 November 2024	Panel discussion "KI an der Grenze – digitale Technologien im Kontext Flucht und Migration," University of Graz, Graz, Austria (UNI-ETC)
14-15 November 2024	Lecture at the Human Rights Center Antonio Papisca, University of Padova, Padova, Italy (Klaus Starl)
18 November 2024	Lecture with Elisabeth Steiner, formerly European Court of Human Rights, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
19 November 2024	Stakeholder workshop City of Winterthur, Switzerland, online (Isabella Meier and Klaus Starl)
20 November 2024	Children's rights song contest, Gratwein-Straßengel, Austria (Paul Walch)

20-22 November 2024	Padova Model UPR 2024, University of Padova, Padova, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner, Sophia Urban)
21 November 2024	Final Conference of SCORE at the Spanish Representation of the European Commission, Madrid, Spain (Nils Groß)
21 November 2024	Human rights workshop on civil courage, Graz, Austria (Simone Philipp and Alexandra Stocker)
28 November 2024	European Young Innovators Festival 2024, Graz, Austria (Paul Walch)
29 November 2024	Global Studies Students Day at the University of Graz, presentation of the UNESCO Centre and its opportunities, Graz, Austria (Nils Groß)
2 December 2024	Human Rights Café, Arqus, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Elias Faller)
2 December 2024	Executive Committee, European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
6 December 2024	Human rights training at MS BG BRG Klusemann, Graz, Austria (Simone Philipp and Klaus Starl)
9 December 2024	Human rights consulting City of Bregenz and presentation of the action plan against racism at the city hall, Bregenz, Austria (Klaus Starl)
9 December 2024	Human rights consulting City of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria (Klaus Starl)
9 December 2024	Meeting of Austrian UNESCO Chairs, Austrian Commission for UNESCO, Vienna, Austria (Gerd Oberleitner)
9-10 December 2024	2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual EU CharterXchange, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in collaboration with the European Commission, online (Markus Möstl)
11 December 2024	Anniversary party 25 years of European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Graz, Austria (ETC Graz and UNI-ETC)
12-13 December 2024	Lecture at the Human Rights Center Antonio Papisca, University of Padova, Padova, Italy (Klaus Starl)
13 December 2024	Lecture "Human rights in armed conflict: the jurisprudence of human rights courts," European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation, Venice, Italy (Gerd Oberleitner)
17 December 2024	Human rights workshop for young people seeking for a job, Sankt Andrä, Austria (Klaus Starl)
17 December 2024	Presentation of global evaluation of city reports at the ECCAR General Assembly, online (Isabella Meier)

# ANNIVERSARIES



**25 years**  
European Training  
and Research Centre  
for Human Rights and  
Democracy



**15 years**  
European Training  
and Research Centre  
for Human Rights  
and Democracy at the  
University of Graz



**5 years**  
International Centre  
for the Promotion  
of Human Rights  
at the Local and  
Regional Levels  
under the Auspices  
of UNESCO



## Anniversary Exhibition

In 2024, we were able to celebrate three jubilees: 25 years ago, in 1999, the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz) has been founded as an association with the purpose of supporting the human rights city process in Graz and to provide human rights education and training. Ten years later, in 2009, the University of Graz incorporated the centre in its structure as European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC) for the purpose of intensifying research and academic training. Finally, since 2019, the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels (UNESCO Centre) works hosted by the ETC and the University.

On 11 December, partners from academia, civil society and public authorities were invited to a joint celebration, following a public lecture and discussion on the freedom of media internationally and in Austria. For this occasion, we did the attempt of presenting our work, our achievements as milestones in **five strands**:

- Human Rights at the Local Level
- Professional Training and Human Rights Monitoring
- Human Rights Education
- Global Academic Cooperation in the Global Campus of Human Rights
- Winter Academy on “Human Rights Go Local”

### Human Rights at the Local Level

ETC Graz plays a key role in the establishment of Graz as Europe's first Human Rights City (2001). From the very beginning, ETC Graz was significantly involved in the human rights city process and took on the role of a coordination centre, which was later expanded to include the function of the office of the Human Rights Advisory Council established in 2007. With sustainable strategies for the implementation of human rights policy at local level, it positioned Graz internationally as a role model for human rights-orientated urban development.

ETC Graz has been dedicated to the promotion and implementation of human rights at local level for 25 years. It advises cities worldwide on integrating human rights-based approaches into administrative structures and developing sustainable strategies against discrimination. It also coordinates the Human Rights Report of the City of Graz as well as the renowned and award-winning youth participation project “Know Your Rights.” An important landmark was Graz's accession to the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) in 2006, a UNESCO initiative that defines concrete commitments against racism through the 10-point action plan.

In this context, ETC Graz, together with ECCAR and UNESCO, developed the “Toolkit for Equality” – a comprehensive policy handbook that provides authorities with practical instruments for promoting anti-discrimination strategies. The toolkit is available in eight languages and is constantly being expanded. This long-standing commitment received special recognition in 2017: the UNESCO General Assembly decided to establish a UNESCO Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels at ETC Graz, a landmark that further strengthened the Centre's international focus.



Members of the Human Rights Advisory Council and ETC Graz provide information about human rights in course of the “Human Rights Tram”, 2018.

### Professional Training and Human Rights Monitoring

From 2004 to 2006, ETC Graz carried out the project “Development and implementation of anti-discrimination training for judges and public prosecutors based on human rights education” (ADTJ). The project was based on close cooperation between the judicial authorities and training centres in Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. At the final conference at the Higher Regional Court of Graz, the then Minister of Justice, Ms Karin Gastinger, pledged to integrate anti-discrimination training into the basic and further training of judicial staff. She also promised a fundamental rights curriculum for trainee judges, which ETC Graz has been offering to all court districts in Austria since 2008 in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Justice, the Austrian Institute for Human Rights and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Fundamental and Human Rights.

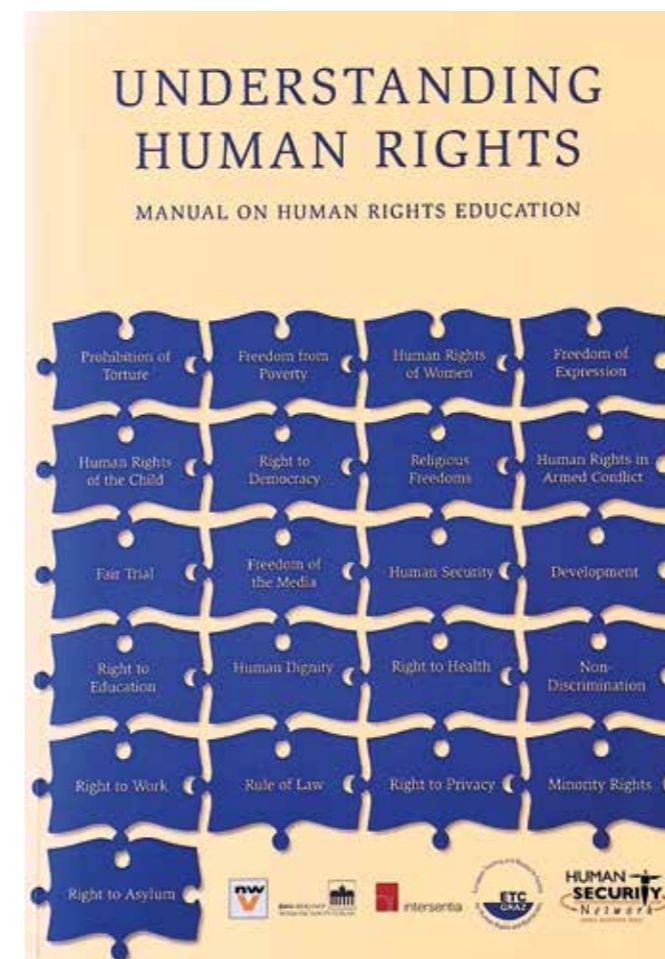
Fundamental rights research was consistently continued at ETC Graz through many projects, including the pioneering project on multiple discrimination (“Locating Intersectional Discrimination”). The members of the ADTJ project consortium also came together in the newly founded expert network “FRALEX” of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Since 2012, ETC Graz has been a reliable contractual partner of FRA in the multidisciplinary European research network now known as “FRANET.” As the Austrian National Focal Point, ETC Graz regularly provides the EU agency with data relevant to fundamental rights and carries out screenings, in-depth investigations and field research in the entire field of fundamental rights. This enables FRA to carry out comparative analyses and provide evidence-based advice to EU decision-makers.



*The members of the Anti-Discrimination-Training-of-Judges project consortium at the final conference in 2006 at the Higher Regional Court in Graz.*

### Human Rights Education

The Manual on Human Rights Education as a contribution to the Austrian Chairmanship of the Human Security Network was developed by ETC Graz at the invitation of the then Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner. It is intended as a support for learners and teachers in the field of human rights education and should be used as a helpful basis for understanding human rights and their violations, for training future human rights educators and for intercultural awareness-raising and exchange. “Understanding Human Rights” contains a selected collection of theoretical knowledge, enriched by practical examples with a culturally sensitive background, and offers additional suggestions for the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills. The selection of topics is intended to enable the search for a common understanding of human rights and to shed light on controversial issues from a culturally sensitive point of view. It has been translated into 23 languages and is available online as an open access publication. Together with training materials and the manual “Spreading the Word / Répondre la Parole,” basic principles of human rights education, on which the work with the manual is based, are available in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Arab world. The manual represents the core of ETC’s diverse activities in the field of human rights education.



*The Manual on Human Rights Education – Understanding Human Rights.*

### Global Academic Cooperation in the Global Campus of Human Rights

The Global Campus for Human Rights is an EU-funded interdisciplinary centre of excellence with over 100 universities and eight master's programmes on human rights and democratisation in Bangkok, Beirut, Buenos Aires, Yerevan, Pretoria, Bishkek, Sarajevo/Bologna and Venice. In line with the United Nations Programme of Action for Human Rights Education, we see it as our mission to facilitate learning about, through and for human rights and to educate the next generations of human rights defenders in order to safeguard human rights, the rule of law and democracy. At the University of Graz, we offer introductory and advanced teaching on human rights and enable students to engage in practical human rights work. Through our educational activities in Graz and Austria as well as with our global partners, we create innovative knowledge and promote skills to meet the current challenges facing human rights and democracy in a globalised society and in the face of planetary crises.



Students at the Global Campus of Human Rights, 2024.

### Winter Academy on “Human Rights Go Local”

This series of events aims to showcase innovative approaches and best practices to protect and promote human rights at the local level in order to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In the run-up to each Academy, the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security and the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Level jointly publish a volume of the “Human Rights Go Local” series. Dozens of speakers then put their expertise and practical experience into the context of this thematic input each year.

In 2024, a total of around 250 representatives of local authorities and other human rights experts from think tanks, universities, civil society and international or regional organisations exchanged ideas in numerous workshops lasting several days. Each year, the participants also adopt a final document summarising the key findings of the Academy, which were presented to local governments around the world at the conference in the form of concrete encouragement.

The conference series, in which around 1,300 participants have taken part online and offline so far, was opened in 2021 by Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen. The internationally renowned Academy and Conference series is organised by the International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Level under the auspices of UNESCO and the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security in Graz, together with UNESCO, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the African Academy of Local Governments (UCLG Africa), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Province of Styria, the City of Graz, and the University of Graz.



The fourth edition of the Academy and Conference series “Human Rights Go Local: What Works” in February 2024 at the television studio of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation in Styria.

We express our gratitude to our partners, members, collaborators and friends for their support in achieving these significant milestones. We look forward to continued support over the next 25 years, which is crucial for maintaining a just society and achieving our goals.



**PUBLICATIONS**

## Publications



Wolfgang Benedek, Lieferkettenverantwortlichkeit aus völkerrechtlicher und menschenrechtlicher Perspektive, in: Newsletter Menschenrechte, 33 (6) November/December 2024, 453-458.

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Federal Ministry of Justice (ed.), Grundrechte im gerichtlichen Berufsalltag: Skriptum zum RiAA-Grundrechtsmodul, European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, updated version November 2023.

Sarah Hertwig, Human Rights Paper Session: The Potential of Human Rights Budgeting for Inclusive Cities, International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels, 2024, available at <https://en.whrcf.org/meetingdata/?q=YToy-OntzOjEyOiJrZXI3b3JkX3R5cGUiO3M6MzoiYWxsljtzOjQ6InBhZ2UiO2k6NDt9&bmode=view&idx=50392380&t=board>

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**INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND  
RESOURCES**





## Infrastructure and Resources

### Digital Infrastructure

Both institutions, the UNESCO Centre and the UNESCO Chair, are provided with the IT infrastructure of the University of Graz. This includes the provision of a dedicated server including security systems, internet access and access to an extensive library of programmes and tools. The software provided includes in particular uniGPT, the University of Graz's internal AI programme, and aTrain, a transcription tool, both of which were developed at the University of Graz. Since 2020, the UNESCO Centre has been using the open-source virtual classroom software BigBlueButton, which provides a secure and encrypted environment for low-threshold online workshops or meetings on a variety of topics. As the platform does not require user registration or installation, it can be accessed from simple devices and locations with unstable connections. The UNESCO Centre also uses Paragraph-Software for its daily office operations, which enables work to be carried out completely independently of location through migration to online methods.



### Resources

In 2024, the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz) had available funds of total EUR 480,000 to cover operating costs, investments, and the implementation of its activities (incl. the activities of the UNESCO Category 2 Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at Local and Regional Levels).

Of this total,

- 60% were provided by the Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights at Local and Regional Levels,
- 13% were provided by European Commission funding,
- 21% were provided by contractors (local, regional, and national authorities, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, the Council of Europe),
- 6% were provided by and dedicated to the Human Rights Advisory Council of the City of Graz and private donors.

A total of 325,000 EUR was spent on staff including consultants (85%); and 15% were used for purchases, investments, and other costs.

The Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO dedicated the following amounts for the implementation of its work programme in 2024:

Management, Clearinghouse, Stakeholder Cooperation	82,500
Human Rights Go Local: What Works, Academy	58,500
Cooperation in and with Africa (African Local Governments Academy, Human Rights City Twinning, Arab Coalition of Cities)	15,000
Capacity-Building and Toolkit for Equality	32,500
Human Rights Go Local Paper series	20,500
Human Rights Lab Styria	36,500
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Total 2024	245,500 EUR

The UNESCO Chair is based at the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC), which was established as a centre of excellence as part of the Faculty of Law in 2009. In the agreement with UNESCO, the university ensured to grant the Chair holder with the necessary resources to fulfil the objectives of the mandate. This includes the provision of facilities, infrastructure, and the necessary personnel to enable the Chair to carry out specific training, research and outreach activities as planned. On the basis of a further cooperation agreement, the University of Graz also undertook to provide the UNESCO Centre with the necessary infrastructure, including facilities and access to university resources, such as IT services.



# Grateful to

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Chair

UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ  
European Training and Research Centre for  
Human Rights and Democracy



UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security

International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the  
Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO

Elisabethstrasse 50B | 8010 Graz | Austria

[humanrightsgolocal.org](http://humanrightsgolocal.org)

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