

The Rise of Human Rights Cities in the EU



3 December 2021

Webinar

Cologne Human Rights City Initiative

About the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

Evidence-based advice to EU Institutions and Member States

Cooperate with human rights actors at all levels: IGOs, EU institutions, national governments, NHRIs, civil society, academia etc.

Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe's Congress, cities' networks and cities through events, dedicated projects or activities.



Human rights in cities and regions

- **An obligation**
 - Independently of size, urban or rural area, all cities and regions are bound to human rights
- **A necessity** - much of the activities are connected to human rights
 - Access and delivery of public services: water and sanitation, sewage, affordable housing, education, healthcare, social services, sport and culture etc.
 - Management of public space
 - Public debate and local democracy
 - Environment protection, sustainability
 - City as employer (incl. sub-contracted services).
- **A challenge**
 - Coordination between all levels of governments
 - Not connecting work to human rights
 - Human rights language
 - Thematic focus

‘Human Rights Cities’: a bottom-up initiative

- A city initiative started in 1997
 - declaring their commitment to build a ‘human rights community’, promote and respect human rights
 - A ‘space for action’ drawing on international norms and standards
 - Participation and people’s empowerment
 - Strategic planning
 - Cooperation and partnerships (People's Movement for Human Rights Learning)
- Expanding internationally, ‘not one size fit-all’ approach
- Interconnected with the development of the “Right of the city”
 - Localising human rights
 - Developing and contributing to the human rights agenda
 - the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City etc.

Human rights, cities and the EU

- Values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights
 - The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – the EU’s ‘Bill of Rights’
- Cities and regions in EU fundamental rights governance - examples
 - Subsidiarity principle
 - European Committee of the Regions (charter of multilevel governance)
 - Urban Agenda partnerships
 - Thematic initiatives and networks: Smart Cities, Green Cities Accord, Covenant of Mayors
- Reinforced in new EU strategies
 - The New [EU Charter Strategy](#) (2020)
 - The [Action plan on integration and inclusion](#) (2020)
 - The [Anti-racism Action Plan](#) (2020)
 - The [LGBTIQ Strategy](#) (2020)
 - The [EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#) (2020)
 - The [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life \(2021-2030\)](#) (2021)

Why a framework for human rights cities in the EU?

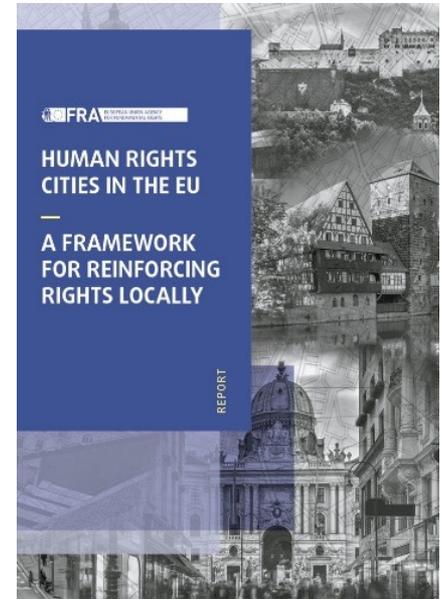
To help:

- Recognise efforts of cities and regions in the protection, implementation and promotion of fundamental rights in the EU.
- Provide guidance on ways to deepen work in fundamental rights.
- Encourage higher standards and mutual-learning.
- Increase links with the EU, in particular the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Developed:

- with cities, regions and practitioners

[Human Rights Cities in the EU: a framework for reinforcing rights locally](#)



Framework for human rights cities

Tools

Methods and resources to support the structures and HR work

12. Mainstreaming
13. Human rights-based approach
14. Capacity, training and human rights education
15. Human rights budgeting and procurement
16. Action plan
17. Check compatibility of local actions with human rights
18. Monitoring/Evaluations
19. Communicating rights/Awareness-raising
20. Cross-national / peer exchange

Structures

Mechanisms/procedures to integrate HR in day-to-day practice

5. Formal declaration
6. Dedicated elected representative
7. Human rights 'office'
8. Participatory council (advisory role e.g. Human Rights Council, Youth Council etc.)
9. Local complaints body (anti-discrimination office, local ombuds, victim support etc.)
10. Annual report
11. Partnerships with national bodies (NHRI, assoc. municipalities etc.) & Int./EU

Foundations

Commitments to rights and principles

1. EU instruments
2. Int'l human rights instruments
3. Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) & Agenda 2030
4. Int'l human rights mechanisms



How can this framework support cities' work?

- **A guide and (sound and robust) reference point**
 - to develop human rights work/become a human rights city
 - To assess state of human rights work, be inspired on what more can be done
- **An impetus**
 - to mobilise EU like-minded cities join the global movement (UCLG campaign towards 100 HR cities)
 - for national initiatives to engage and support cities (govt. programmes, networks, NHRI projects etc.)
 - to help reinforce the human rights approach in EU policies (green cities, urban agenda, etc.), Hence contributing to the new Strategy on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and new 'Citizens, Equality, Rights and values Programme' (and funding)
- **A space for cooperation for cities**
 - between cities for innovation, more impact (piloting, participatory action-research projects etc.)
 - to discuss a possible 'human rights city' label, with peer to peer accreditation.

Why becoming a Human Rights City? – video clip

<https://youtu.be/6E6m8hPoUdw>



Thank you

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