

THE UNIVERSITY AS HUMAN RIGHTS AGENT

on the occasion of the 50th anniversary
of the United Nations International
Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

in honour of **Manfred Nowak**

Saturday, 17 December 2016, 15.00 - 24.00

Colloquium followed by Middle Eastern Buffet and Live Music
Rooftop, Law Faculty, University of Vienna
Schottenbastei 10-16, 1010 Vienna

Secretly Organised by

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(Christina Binder)*

*Vienna Master of Arts in Human Rights, University of Vienna
(Georges Younes, Marijana Grandits, Sabine Mann)*

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Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, Vienna

R.S.V.P. by 12 December 2016: humanrights@univie.ac.at



Universities play an increasingly important role in the field of human rights: in terms of academic formation and human rights education for students; as places of interdisciplinary research and academic think-tanks as well as in the field of policy advice.

Human rights do not only constitute one of many topics in academic research, but also a responsibility of the university as an organization. Currently, **Universities are human rights actors** in different capacities. Through the course of the past years they have given different institutional answers to the challenges posed by human rights, such as instating professorial chairs dedicated to human rights, establishing human rights institutes and interdisciplinary research centres as well as inaugurating specific human rights studies.

For many years, **intensified engagement** is what has been asked of scholarship and universities by **international institutions**. In accordance with the aims of the **United Nations**, knowledge of the basis and objectives of **human rights should constitute an integral part of all University studies**. That way, after graduating, everybody would have the capacity to implement human rights in his/her professional and social environment.

This crystallized in the vision of a utopian "**Human Rights University**" (Barnett/Guzman) which links the universal character of human rights with the idea of the university as a cognitive space in society that deliberately engages in the wider

world and takes a stance on the advancement of human rights within its own structures and beyond.

Given current challenges to human rights, such as the recent refugee crisis, also the **importance of Universities as human rights agents is likely to increase**. At the same time, human rights education and research at Universities faces **important challenges and obstacles**, not the least in view of financial and institutional constraints.

As source for reflection on social development, but also in their role as "generators of knowledge", **Universities have a special responsibility to also critically reflect about their own teaching and research practice**.

In all these initiatives Manfred Nowak has played a leading role at the University of Vienna and in many other academic and non-academic settings. The University of Vienna acknowledges human rights as cross-cutting issue in academia and Manfred Nowak and his team have truly transformed it into a human rights actor.

This symposium, **in honour of Manfred Nowak**, proposes to take an internal as well as an external view on the University as human rights agent. It intends to look at the above questions from "**The Inside**" as well as from "**The Outside**". In order to do this, it unites **distinguished academics as well as high-level practitioners** to discuss the place of Universities as human rights agents.

PROGRAM

Master of Ceremony: **Georges Younes**

Panel moderation: **Marijana Grandits**

15:00 *Guests take their seats*

15:15 *Introduction into the program*

15:30 *Welcome Addresses*

Bettina Perthold

| Vice-Dean of the Law Faculty, University of Vienna

15:45 *Keynote Speech*

Michael O'Flaherty

| Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

16:05 *PANEL "From the Inside"*

Academics discuss the role human rights play in academia and if Universities act as human rights agents.

Panelists:

Heinz Faßmann

| Vice-Rector of the University of Vienna

Christina Binder

| Professor for International Law, University of Vienna

Martin Jäggle

| Former Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology

George Ulrich

| Director of the European Masters in Human Rights and Democratization (E.MA)

17:15 *Coffee-Tea Break*

17:45 *PANEL "From the Outside"*

Representatives from politics, international organisations, NGOs as well as human rights activists discuss the role of Universities as human rights agents.

Panelists:

Melita Hummel-Sunjic

| Head of Communication with Communities, UNHCR

Christian Felber

| Founder of the "Economy for the Common Good"

Walter Suntinger

| Human Rights Consultant

Wolfgang Petritsch

| Diplomat and President of the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation

19:00 *Closing Statement*

Walter Schachermayer

| Professor of Mathematics, University of Vienna

19:30 *Middle Eastern Buffet and Live Music*

INVITED GUESTS (amongst others)

Amnesty International (AI)
Antidiskriminierungsstelle Graz (AG)
Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)
Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI)
Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation (AMPF)
Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres (BMEIA)
Caritas
City of Vienna
Council of Europe (CoE)
Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)
DER STANDARD
DIE PRESSE
DIE WIENER ZEITUNG
Diakonie
Diplomatische Akademie
EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
EU Human Rights Working Group (COHOM)
European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)
European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)
ETC Graz
European Forum Alpbach (EFA)
European Inter-University Centre (EIUC)
European Parliament (EP)
European University Institute (EUI)
Gemeinwohl Ökonomie
Hemayat
Hermann und Marianne Straniak Stiftung
Human Rights Consulting Vienna (HRCV)
Human Rights Watch (HRW)
Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (IICISAR)
International Anti-corruption Academy (IACA)
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)
International Human Rights Forum Lucerne (IHRF)
International Peace Institute (IPI)
International Press Institute
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
Lateinamerika Institut
Liga Menschenrechte
Licht für die Welt
LEFÖ
Members of the Austrian National Parliament
Nadja Lorenz Attorney of Law
Netherlands Institute of Human rights (SIM)

Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR)
Oesterreichische Kontrollbank (OEBK)
Oesterreichische Mineralölverwaltung (OMV)
Oesterreichischer Rundfunk (ORF)
Oesterreichisches Institut für International Politik (OIIP)
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Open Society Justice Initiative (OSI/OSJI)
Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
Poellath&Partners (P&P)
Poznań Human Rights Centre (PHRC)
Pressclub Concordia
Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI)
Reprieve
Republikanischer Club (RepClub)
Riga Graduate School of Law (RGSL)
Reportes without Borders (RWB)
Sir Peter Ustinov Stiftung (SPUS)
SOS Mitmensch
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT)
Südwind Agentur
The Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue (BKF)
The Elders
This Human World
United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Commission Austria (UNESCO)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC)
United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights (UNSPR)
United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food (UNSPR)
United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders (UNSPR)
United Nations Women (UNW)
University of Graz (UG)
University of Leuven (KUL)
University of Sydney (US)
University of Vienna (UV)
Volksanwaltschaft
Webster Vienna Private University (WVPU)
Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus (ZARA)

We kindly ask you to be discreet and not mention this initiative to Manfred Nowak, if your paths shall cross in the meantime.