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RIGHTSCITIES PROJECT BRIEF



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This booklet is part of the RIGHTSCITIES project, co-funded by the European Union, under the CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI call.

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ABOUT THE RIGHTSCITIES PROJECT

The RIGHTSCITIES project was dedicated to supporting five European cities in integrating the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights into their everyday governance. Through capacity building, tool development, and knowledge exchange, the project empowered local government administration in five partner cities and civil representatives in each of these cities to uphold human rights in practical and sustainable ways.

This project is co-funded by the **European Union**.

City Partners:

- City of Gdańsk (Poland)
- City of Lund (Sweden)
- City of Sopot (Poland)
- City of Utrecht (The Netherlands)
- City of Vienna (Austria)

Academic Partners:

- The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
- Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights
- Utrecht University

Key Objectives

Strengthening cities' capacities to implement the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Promoting collaboration between city officials, civil society, and academics to foster a united approach to human rights integration.

Developing and sharing tools and resources that assist cities in embedding human rights principles into their governance structures.

Advocating for good practices and building a network of Human Rights Cities across Europe, committed to human rights accountability and innovation.

This project brief is structured along the four components of the RIGHTSCITIES project, i.e. Online Modules: Bringing Human Rights Closer to Home, Local Trainings, Self-Assessment Tool, and Research Reports.



ONLINE MODULES - BRINGING HUMAN RIGHTS CLOSER TO HOME

Through the RIGHTSCITIES Online Modules, we aim to contribute to increased fundamental rights knowledge among local authorities!

The online modules were designed specifically for city officials, local policymakers, and service providers who not only seek to deepen their understanding of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights but are also committed to rolling out locally adapted training within their organisations and professional contexts. They equip participants with the tools and knowledge to promote and protect fundamental rights in urban governance and to empower others to do the same.

These modules, tailored for local duty-bearers*, enable them to take on the role of trainers who will drive meaningful change at the local level.

This self-paced course includes three modules requiring a total of approximately 12 hours of engagement, offering a flexible and accessible learning experience to fit one's schedule. Each module combines learning materials with interactive exercises, case studies, and practical tools to help one apply fundamental rights and principles to local challenges.



*All levels of the state, including local governments, are considered to be duty bearers under human rights conventions. Being a duty bearer means having the obligation to use all available tools of governance to realise human rights for all inhabitants.



HOW:

- **Self-Paced Modules:** Navigate through three engaging modules designed to foster understanding, practical application, and local adaptation of rights and principles.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Connect with academic experts, city officials, civil society experts, and fellow champions from across five European cities to share insights, challenges, and best practices.
- **Action-Oriented Approach:** Learn how to address local challenges, implement good practices, and develop customised training strategies for your city's unique context to raise awareness of the EU Charter and bring Human Rights-Based Approach to everyday city governance.

WHAT:

- **Module 1:** What are the Fundamental Rights in the European Union and Why do they matter? Explore the six core titles of the Charter, their respective articles, and relevance to local governance context.
- **Module 2:** How do cities make these rights and principles real in daily governance? Learn how to translate rights and principles into tangible practices.
- **Module 3:** Tailoring Human Rights Training for Local Impact. Develop actionable training strategies tailored to your city's context.

By joining this course, participants become part of a movement to institutionalise human rights in urban governance. Their work will contribute to building inclusive, equitable, and sustainable communities where everyone's rights are respected and upheld.



LOCAL TRAININGS

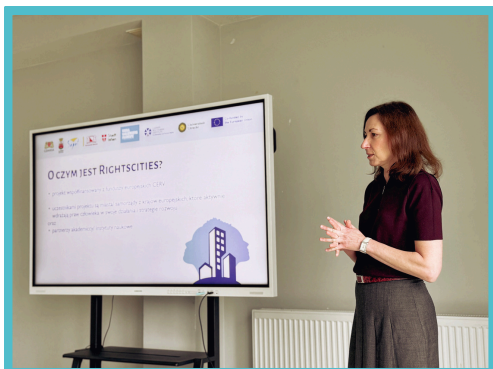
In the course of the project, each partner city organised local trainings, which build on the online modules and support local duty bearers in applying human rights principles in their daily work. The aim was to strengthen human rights in local governance by helping participants understand how human rights relate to their responsibilities, tasks, and strategic goals. Participants learned to identify human rights aspects in their work, define relevant focus areas, and develop a concrete action plan to address one selected issue.

Implementation

The trainings can be delivered within a single organisation or across several organisations and departments.

Within the RIGHTSCITIES project, city partners have conducted local trainings to raise awareness and build capacity around the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the FRA Framework on Human Rights Cities and a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) for a wide range of actors, including:

- Municipal departments
- City councils
- Social and community services
- Human rights and civil society organisations



Methods and Activities

The trainings are interactive and practice-oriented. They may include group work and discussions, case studies, short expert presentations, quizzes, and games.

Participants can reflect on questions such as:

- Where do human rights connect to one's area of work?
- Which activities or challenges require a stronger human rights focus?
- Which stakeholders should be involved?
- What resources and partners are needed?

From Training to Action

Each participant or group of participants selects one issue to address and defines clear responsibilities and next steps. Participants present the issue internally and agree on how to move forward.

Follow-Up and Dialogue

- Follow-up session helps to reflect on learning, internal reception, and progress
- An organisation-wide dialogue event can be a space for departments to present their initiatives and discuss how human rights apply across different areas of work



SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

The self-assessment tool was developed as part of the RIGHTSCITIES project to help partner cities, and potentially cities beyond the project, with conducting a systematic internal assessment, conducive to reflection, of the current level of implementation of and compliance with the Human Rights Cities Framework, and the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities, based on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The self-assessment tool is comprised of two parts:

Part 1 focuses on how the municipality establishes and strengthens its identity and practice as a Human Rights City. It assesses the institutional, legal, and practical basis that enables the city to promote, protect, and fulfil human rights for all residents.

The assessment is based on the three pillars of the FRA Human Rights Cities Framework: foundations (commitments to rights and principles), structures (mechanisms and procedures to integrate human rights into practice), and tools (methods and resources to support the structures and human rights work).

Part 2 focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities through structures, strategies, and practices existing in the municipality to contribute to the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities. It examines the city's approach to inclusion, accessibility, and equality across governance, planning, budgeting, and service delivery, building on Article 26 "Integration of Persons with Disabilities" of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). It explores how these commitments are implemented in three key life areas: Work and Employment, Housing, and Political, Democratic, and Community Participation. Questions in each of these key life areas are structured around 8 components, i.e., existing structures, participation and co-design, planning strategy, governance and budget, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, information and communication, equality and intersectionality.



RESEARCH REPORTS

RIGHTSCITIES' action-oriented approach to change is further substantiated by the two research reports produced as part of the project.

To strengthen the self-assessment tool and its methodology, and in the light of the lack of existing self-assessment tools for cities, the first research report looks into the five cities' experiences of the self-assessment process. The report builds on the cities' responses to questions related to four stages of the self-assessment process, namely development, testing, analysis, and identification of action points, for each part of the self-assessment tool, respectively.

The second research report looks into how five partner cities engage with civil society to identify good practices of meaningful engagement. The report builds on the evidence collected throughout the project, including the participatory workshop conducted with RIGHTSCITIES partners in Zagreb in September 2025.





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**DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT OR
ACCESS TO THE ONLINE COURSE?**

Contact: tatsiana.rahozina@rwi.lu.se

For updates and insights, follow our project on
LinkedIn (@Rightscities):



Find more information about Rightscities:

