



28-29 April 2022
New Bulgarian University
21, Montevideo Str., Sofia, Bulgaria

Human Rights Legal Education in Bulgaria: Combining Theory and Practice

Context of the project

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) have been working with the New Bulgarian University (NBU) and the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice to build up the capacity of Bulgarian universities for the introduction of human rights legal education with practical orientation. In such cooperation, the Government Agent's Office at the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice, the Department of Law at the NBU, and the NCHR have undertaken a series of capacity building measures to ensure that international and European human rights law are taught effectively, by qualified academic staff, and with consideration to its domestic law dimension.


Expert review of existing curricula

As part of the activity, NCHR experts carried out a review of the existing curricula. Through cooperation with the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice and the New Bulgarian University, they collected information from university management, academic staff and students, respectively. They also reviewed relevant documents and other sources. As a result, the team has drafted guidelines on the implementation of human rights in horizontal training (included in other disciplines) and vertical training (as a compulsory subject and/or specialised master's programme).

Results and outputs

- Analysis of existing curricula and of the effectiveness of human rights teaching at Bulgarian universities drafted.
- Guidelines on the introduction of human rights in the mandatory legal education curriculum drafted.
- A plan for horizontal and vertical teaching of human rights in the legal education drafted.
- Initiative for training future human rights specialists and support for the establishment of an accredited human rights doctoral program at a Bulgarian university undertaken.
- Model PhD course on human rights to be part of the respective PhD training at the Bulgarian universities proposed.



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Draft agenda

First day, Thursday, 28 April 2022

**Simultaneous interpretation English - Bulgarian will be provided during Day 1.*

8.30-9.00 Registration

9.00-9.30 Introductory session

- Welcome by Ms. Nadezhda Yordanova, Minister of Justice
- Welcome by Ms. Milena Kotseva, Director of the Government Agent's Office and Project Leader
- Welcome by Prof. dr. Vesselin Vuchkov, Head of the Law Department at NBU
- Welcome by Prof. dr. Gentian Zyberi, NCHR

Moderator: *Assoc. Prof. Katerina Yocheva, NBU*

9.30-11:00 Introduction of the project component “Human Rights Legal Education in Bulgaria”

- The importance of the project within the framework of activities of the Ministry of Justice - Mr. Borislav Ganchev, Deputy Minister of Justice and Ms. Silvina Sobadzhieva, Government Agent and Coordinator of the project
- Assessment Report. Effectiveness of the human rights teaching in Bulgarian law faculties - Prof. Gentian Zyberi, NCHR
- Guidelines to effective human rights teaching and model curricula – *Assoc. Prof. Deyana Marcheva, PhD, NBU*
- Teaching human rights at present and in the future – *Assoc. Prof. Katerina Yocheva, NBU*

Q&A (about 30 minutes)

Moderator: *Ms. Milena Kotseva, Director of the Government Agent's Office;*

Short break – 15 minutes

11.15- 12:45 The impact of Human Rights Law on the domestic legal system

- The impact of the human rights jurisprudence of ECtHR and ECJ on the national legal system (general issues) - Ms. Maria Dimitrova, PhD candidate, Government Agent
- The Role of the Constitutional Court in human rights protection – Ms. Rayna Georgieva, expert at the Constitutional Court

- The relationship between the supranational (the ECtHR and ECJ) and national courts - judge Ivo Hinov, Specialised Criminal Court

Q&A

Moderator: *Ch. Assist. Prof. Silviya Tsoneva, PhD, NBU*

Lunch break – 12.45-13.45

13.45 – 15:00 Combining theory and practice: including relevant jurisprudence in the curriculum and learning by doing

- Human Rights Teaching to legal professionals in Bulgaria – Improving the Effectiveness of Human Rights Training of Magistrates - Ms. Kornelia Kirilova, National Institute of Justice
- Human Rights Teaching to legal professionals in Bulgaria – attorneys – Ms. Sofia Razboynikova, Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights
- Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP): Training for legal professionals, who are at the forefront of the protection of human rights – Mr. Tomislav Toshkov, Secretary General of Attorneys’ Training Centre and HELP Info Point for Bulgaria
- Moot court’ opportunities and experiences –Mr. Nedko Radev, Chair of the International Moot Court Competitions Association

Q&A

Moderator: *Assoc. Prof. Denitza Toptchiyska, PhD, NBU*

Short break – 15 minutes

15:15 – 16:20 Human rights legal education in Europe

- A human rights-based approach to clinical legal education– Prof. dr. Felisa Tibbitts, Chair in Human Rights Education, Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM), Department of Law, Economics and Governance at Utrecht University
- Human rights legal education in Norway, Dr. Stener Ekern, NCHR
- Human Rights through higher education, specialised training programmes – Prof. dr. Manfred Nowak, Secretary General of the Global Campus on Human Rights

Q&A (about 30 minutes)

Moderator: *Assoc. Prof Deyana Marcheva, PhD, NBU*

End of first day

Second day, Friday, 29 April 2022

9.00-9.15 Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Welcome, organizers:** Ms. Milena Kotseva, Director of the Government Agent's Office and Project Leader and Assoc. Prof. Katerina Yocheva, NBU

9.00-10.15 The impact of international and European human rights law and adjudicatory mechanisms on the Bulgarian legal system

- The work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) with regard to Bulgaria - Prof. dr. Velina Todorova, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- The work of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with regard to Bulgaria - Ms. Genoveva Tisheva, member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- The work of the UN Human Rights Committee with regard to Bulgaria - Prof. Gentian Zyberi, NCHR and member of the UN Human Rights Committee

Q&A

Moderator: *Assoc. Prof. Ginka Simeonova, PhD, NBU*

Short break – 15 minutes

10.30 – 12:00 Teaching during pandemic

- COVID 19 Impact on Legal Education - Ms. Miryana Ilcheva, PhD, Government Agent
- High Education: From disruption to recovery. The lingering effects of pandemic teaching. Good practices - NBU mixed panel teachers and students

Q&A

Moderator: *Assoc. Prof. Katerina Yocheva, NBU*

End of the second day and of the conference.