

## AUSTRIAN HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE

### History

The Austrian Human Rights Institute was founded in 1987 with its seat in Salzburg. Its existence was the result of a Recommendation of the Council of Europe (No. R (79) 16, 13 September 1979), which encouraged the establishment and development of national centers in Member States, to provide facilities for human rights studies and research. According to the Recommendation initiative was taken by Professor DDr. Franz Matscher, at that time judge of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, who launched the Institute in Co-operation with the Provincial Governor of Salzburg, Dr. Wilfried Haslauer and the Federal Minister of Science, Professor Dr. Hans Tuppy.

In these days its legal form was that of a “public service association” with the Republic of Austria, the Province of Salzburg and the Catholic University Foundation in Salzburg as members and it was the only Human Rights Institute in Austria as well as in the overall German language area.

In January 2014 the Austrian Human Rights Institute was incorporated in the University of Salzburg and established as one of its Centers under the direction of Univ.-Prof. Dr. Benjamin Kneihs (deputy director: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Kirsten Schmalenbach) followed by az. Prof. Dr. Reinhard Klaushofer as head of the institute in October 2015.

### Activities and aims

The Austrian Human Rights Institute considers itself as a center of competence for the protection of human rights, especially within the framework of the European Convention on Human Rights, the EU Fundamental Rights Charta and the United Nations. Its main tasks are among others the following:

- Spreading and promoting the idea of human rights in general
- Documentation and dissemination of the case law of European, International and Austrian Courts and Tribunals in the area of fundamental and human rights
- Documentation of the relevant literature
- Inquiry office for courts, public authorities, lawyers and students
- Information on human rights activities and teaching in Austria and abroad
- Training and further education within human rights aspects
- Human rights monitoring and relevant consulting

Six times a year the Institute publishes the "Newsletter Menschenrechte", which is intended to give precise and timely information on the judgments and decisions of the ECHR in Strasbourg in German language (these remarks can also be found as official German translations on the HUDOC database, which provides access to the case-law of the ECHR). The Newsletter reports as well on judgments of the highest Courts of Austria and those of the European Court of Justice and other national or international judicial and quasi-judicial organs. In addition it contains short articles and commentaries on case law and legislation together with book reviews relating to fundamental and human rights.

The Institute conducts human rights trainings and further education for various facilities (e.g. Federal Ministry of Justice – judges and applicants for judges, prison officers, Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs – chief police officers, etc.).

### **Symposia and events**

The Austrian Human Rights Institute treats significant human rights topics in symposia and publishes them in "Publications of the Austrian Human Rights Institute", in the series "menschenrechte konkret" and in special editions of its "Newsletter Menschenrechte". Since 1993 the Institute has organised numerous symposia and major lectures on Human Rights topics for the broad public.

### **Library**

The Institute has a well-assorted library and offers study facilities to the interested public. Its collection comprises currently about 3000 items (volumes, periodicals and information pamphlets, case reports of the Commission and ECHR in Strasbourg and a wide selection of Council of Europe documents in various areas together with publications of numerous other Human Rights institutes).