

# A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

From the UDHR to the ECHR to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFREU)

*edited by Beatrice Benocci*



Jean Monnet Module 'Activating EU Rights' (ActEuR)  
Center for European Studies - DiSPS, University of Salerno

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Coordinator Prof. Dario Verderame

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## Foreword

Nurturing a culture of Human Rights through the School was one of the commitments promoted and implemented in the framework of the activities of the Jean Monnet Module of Excellence *Activating EU Rights: Past and Present of Fundamental Human Rights - ActEuR* (2022-2025). The Module's Coordinator is Prof. Dario Verderame of the University of Salerno.

The ActEuR Module is a project co-funded by the European Union for the three-year period 2022-2025 within the framework of the Erasmus Plus - Jean Monnet Activities Programme, aimed at supporting activities of excellence in teaching and research on topics related to the European integration process. Moreover, the ActEuR Module is part of the activities promoted by the Centre for European Studies and the Department of Political and Social Studies (DiSPS) at the University of Salerno.

Throughout the three-year project, the main objective of the Module was to deepen knowledge and raise awareness of the threat to Human and Fundamental Rights at the European level. This objective was pursued through a socio-historical perspective that adopts the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU) as a frame of reference. The Charter represented the instrument through which the ActEuR project aimed to link past and present forms of violations/threats to the rights of dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizenship and justice as fundamental values of the EU.

Over the past three years, over a thousand students from secondary schools in the Salerno area, accompanied by their teachers, have been able to participate in the ActEuR Module activities dedicated to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (JM ActEuR Roundtables). The methodology used was to flank the classic frontal lesson with *Cooperative learning* and *Learning by doing*. In this way, students were trained to be in turn trainers/disseminators of *Good Practices* for Human Rights.

During the same period, the Module offered teachers the opportunity to discuss the topic of Human Rights and how this subject is taught in Italian schools. Through various opportunities for discussion, from conferences to seminars and, finally, through specific

Focus Groups, it was possible to obtain a picture of the approach adopted by Italian school teachers to the topic of Human Rights. As in the case of the students, the teachers also showed a growing interest in learning about the European Union and the way it protects and promotes Human Rights in Europe and globally.

Following the enthusiasm found among teachers and students, aware of the difficulties encountered by Italian teachers in having a complete but concise overview of Human Rights and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, we decided to produce this Guide, with the commitment that it would be at the same time exhaustive but flexible; that it would be a tool to accompany the teaching of Human Rights for first and second grade high schools. The Guide, therefore, wants to contribute to nurture a culture of Human Rights and to develop innovative practices and methodologies for their teaching and dissemination with a special focus on schools.

The work carried out over the last three years has been made possible thanks to, and above all because of, the willingness of the teachers and head teachers, to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks.

Salerno (IT),

January 21, 2025

Prof. Dario Verderame



## Introduction: from the UDHR to the ECHR

All human beings are equal from the moment of birth, with equal rights and equal dignity. In their relations they must act in a spirit of brotherhood because they are endowed with reason and conscience'.  
(UDHR, 1948)

Presenting, as this Guide aims to do, how the European Union acts in the field of Human Rights and how these can be addressed at school requires a brief examination of two fundamental documents: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. In this brief introduction, the main elements of both will be presented.

10 December is International Human Rights Day, established in 1950 by the United Nations. This date commemorates the day of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and is both a warning and a memento, so that the horrors that characterised human relations in the past and, in particular, during the Second World War (1939-1945) are not repeated. The Declaration was drafted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, itself created in 1946, only a few months after the establishment of the United Nations (24 October 1945). The Commission drafted a document, later approved, of 30 articles. This Declaration called on the whole world to reflect on the inalienable rights of every individual and the challenges still open to guarantee dignity, freedom and equity.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) therefore establishes the fundamental rights of every person, regardless of race, gender, language, religion or social status.

The Documents that inspired the Universal Declaration of Human Rights		
<p><b>Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen</b></p> <p>Adopted during the French Revolution, it is considered one of the first documents to enunciate human rights (1789)</p>	<p><b>Washington Declaration</b></p> <p>Adopted by the League of Nations, it enunciated the fundamental rights of man and society (1916)</p>	<p><b>The United Nations Charter</b></p> <p>Adopted at the San Francisco Conference, its preamble already contained references to fundamental human rights (1945)</p>



Here are some of its most important articles: the right to life (Article 3); the right to liberty (Article 11); the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 18); the right to freedom of expression (Article 19); the right to freedom of association (Article 20); the right to freedom of assembly (Article 21); the right to protection of the law (Article 7). In the latter case, it is interesting to quote the text: *No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, degrading or humiliating treatment or punishment.*

Among the initiators of the Declaration were the wife of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, who served as president of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Canadian lawyer John Humphrey, and French jurist René Cassin.

The UDHR has been transposed by many states and international organisations, but it has not been universally adopted: today, more than 190 countries have adopted it. States that have transposed it and incorporated it into their national constitutions include United States, France, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia. The Constitution of the Italian Republic, approved in 1948, recognises and guarantees many of the rights mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International organisations that have incorporated the Declaration include the Council of Europe and the European Union, UNESCO, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Those who do not adhere to or respect the UDHR		
<p>In 1948, of the 58 members of the United Nations, eight countries abstained from voting on the Declaration (Saudi Arabia, South African Union, Soviet Union, Belarus, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary) and two did not participate in the voting (Yemen and Honduras). Although no country voted against, critical issues emerged from the outset related to the religious or political-economic systems of some states. Saudi Arabia observed that the Islamic tradition, according to which human rights are regulated by divine law, had not been taken into account in the drafting of the charter.</p>	<p>China was one of the first nations to sign the UDHR, but its accession was always accompanied by reservations and conditions.</p> <p>In 2015, at the UN Human Rights Congress, Chinese Premier Xi Jinping argued that the UDHR is an important document for the protection of Human Rights but also stressed that China has its own values and traditions that must be respected. (Source: BBC News 2015; Human Rights Watch 2015).</p>	<p>According to Amnesty International, there are still many states that do not respect the principles of the UDHR. These include Cuba, Burma, North Korea, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Turkey (2020).</p> <p>Also, according to Amnesty, the global situation has worsened in the last two years in terms of respect for rights: 'From north to south, east to west, authoritarian policies have eroded freedoms of expression and association, affected gender equality and eroded sexual and reproductive rights' (Report 2023 - 2024).</p>

In general, over all these years, UDHR has been a source of change, inspiration and empowerment. It has been a reference point for the American civil rights movement and the women's rights movement. It has inspired the fight against racial, sexual and religious discrimination. The Declaration also fulfils an important monitoring function through the UN Secretary-General, who monitors the human rights situation worldwide, the Human Rights Committee, which examines country reports on the human rights situation, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The UDHR is also a tool for human rights education and training for both government officials and humanitarian workers, as well as for awareness-raising among civil society. Finally, the UDHR is a point of reference for criminal justice in investigating human rights violations and prosecuting perpetrators (Article 10: Everyone is equally entitled to fair treatment and to a public and impartial hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal established to determine the facts and the law in a dispute) and for civil justice (Article 25: Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms proclaimed in this Declaration can be realised).

On 4 November 1950, the member governments of the Council of Europe, established in 1949, signed the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The preamble to the Convention made clear reference to the principles and values of the UDHR:

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is the achievement of greater unity between its members and that one of the methods by which that aim is to be pursued is the maintenance and further realisation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Reaffirming their profound belief in those fundamental freedoms which are the foundation of justice and peace in the world and are best maintained on the one hand by an effective political democracy and on the other by a common understanding and observance of the Human Rights upon which they depend

Being resolved, as the governments of European countries which are like-minded and have a common heritage of political traditions, ideals, freedom and the rule of law, to take the first steps for the collective enforcement of certain of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration

Ultimately, the member states of the Council of Europe, committed to achieving peace and prosperity on European soil, recognised themselves in the principles of the Declaration and undertook to ensure the collective guarantee of some of the rights set



out in the Universal Declaration.

Currently, 46 member states of the Council of Europe are party to the Convention, including all member states of the European Union. For its part, the Russian Federation will no longer be a party to the Convention from 16 September 2022, following its expulsion from the Council of Europe.

The Convention establishes the European Court of Human Rights, based in Strasbourg and composed of 46 judges, one from each State party to the Convention. The Court's role is to monitor compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols. Anyone who considers themselves a victim of a violation of the rights guaranteed by the Convention can apply to the Court. The Convention guarantees fundamental rights such as the right to life, liberty and security, respect for private life, freedom of opinion and expression, and prohibits torture and discrimination. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe is the depositary of the Convention.

#### Establishment of the Council of Europe

At the end of the Second World War, on the initiative of the British leader Winston Churchill, the Hague Conference was held (1948), which led to the creation of the Council of Europe (5 May 1949), the first body completely separate from the European Union. This was followed by the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1950 and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. Since its creation in 1949, the Council of Europe has felt the need to give Europe a symbol with which the peoples of Europe could identify. On 25 October 1955, the Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted a blue emblem representing a circle of twelve golden stars. In 1983, the European Parliament adopted the flag created by the Council of Europe and recommended its use as the emblem of the European Communities. The Council of Europe is the main human rights organisation on the European continent. The Council of Europe works in close partnership with the European Union and cooperates with the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and partner countries in its neighbourhood and the rest of the world.

Here are the main articles of the Convention: art. 2, which guarantees the right to life and states that no one shall be deprived of his life except in cases provided for by law; art. 3, which prohibits torture and degrading or humiliating punishment or treatment; art. 5, which protects personal liberty by prohibiting arbitrary arrest or detention; art. 6, which guarantees the right to a fair and public trial; art. 8, which protects private and

family life, home and correspondence; art. 9, which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion; art. 10, which protects freedom of expression; art. 14, which prohibits discrimination in the exercise of any of the rights guaranteed by the Convention.

EU action and the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union fall within the framework of the principles and rules just mentioned. This is discussed in the next chapter.

## 1. The European Union, Human and Fundamental Rights

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. (TEU)

The European Union is founded on and acts in accordance with fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law, which it recognises as its founding values in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

It is interesting to note that these values also guide the Union's external action. However, let us take it one step at a time. The European Union acceded to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) on 1 December 1953. In 1999, the European Council deemed it appropriate to consolidate the fundamental rights recognised at Union level in a Charter with the aim of enhancing their visibility. Consequently, in December 2000, the European Commission, in collaboration with the Parliament and the Council, adopted the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU), also known as the Nice Charter. The Charter delineates the civil, political, economic and social rights of European citizens and all persons residing within the territory of the Union. Comprising 54 articles and a preamble, the document underscores the spiritual and moral values of the EU. Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, the Charter attained legal binding status and was assigned a legal effect equivalent to that of the Treaties of the Union. It applies to the European institutions, bodies and agencies, as well as to Member States when implementing European legislation. It is important to note that the Charter operates in conjunction with national and international systems for the protection of fundamental rights, including the European Convention on Human Rights. The EU itself characterises the Charter as a modern and comprehensive instrument that protects and promotes people's rights and freedoms in the light of changes in society, social progress and scientific and technological developments. Since 2010, the European Commission has published an annual report monitoring progress in the application of the Charter. From 2021, the document will focus on a different thematic area of strategic importance governed by EU law.

## Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

The Charter is composed of an introductory preamble and 54 articles, which are divided into seven chapters:

Chapter I: Dignity (human dignity, right to life, right to the integrity of the person, prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, prohibition of slavery and forced labour)

Chapter II: Freedoms (right to liberty and security, respect for private and family life, protection of personal data, right to marry and found a family, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of the arts and sciences, right to education, professional freedom and right to work, freedom to conduct business, right to property, right to asylum, protection in the event of removal, expulsion and extradition)

Chapter III: Equality (equality before the law, non-discrimination, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, equality between men and women, rights of the child, rights of the elderly, inclusion of the disabled).

Chapter IV: Solidarity (workers' right to information and consultation within the company, right of collective bargaining and action, right of access to employment services, protection in the event of unjustified dismissal, fair and just working conditions, prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work, family and professional life, social security and social assistance, health protection, access to services of general economic interest, environmental protection, consumer protection).

Chapter V: Citizenship (right to vote and stand in elections to the European Parliament and municipal elections, right to good administration, right of access to documents, European Ombudsman, right to petition, freedom of movement and residence, diplomatic and consular protection).

Chapter VI: Justice (right to an effective remedy and to an impartial judge, the presumption of innocence and rights of defence, the principles of legality and proportionality of offences and penalties, and the right not to be tried or punished twice for the same offence).

Chapter VII: General Provisions.

## 1.1 EUROPEAN BODIES AND INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH HUMAN AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

In the current European institutional system, there are several bodies dealing with Human and Fundamental Rights:

- **European Commission:** the Commission promotes the protection and promotion of Human Rights within the EU and abroad.
- **European Council:** the Council represents the EU Member States and deals with foreign and security policy.
- **European Parliament:** the Parliament represents EU citizens and deals with EU legislation and policy.
- **Court of Justice of the European Union:** The Court ensures the application of EU law and protects the rights of individuals.
- **European External Action Service (EEAS):** the Service deals with EU foreign and security policy.

There are a number of organisations that help the European institutions to put human and fundamental rights into practice:

- **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA):** The Agency is an independent centre that works to promote and protect human rights in the EU. The FRA is based in Vienna and helps the European Union and its Member States when they are putting EU law into practice in the area of fundamental rights. It also has a mission to inform the public about fundamental rights, including human rights as defined by the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- **Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men:** The Committee's job is to help the European Commission create and put in place ways to encourage equal opportunities for men and women. It does this by encouraging EU countries and other relevant groups to share their experience, policies and practices.
- **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE):** The Institute's mission is to produce independent research and exchange good practice to promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination. The Institute works closely with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

## 1.2 THE EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Recognising the importance of knowledge of human and fundamental rights, the European Commission launched the 2020 Strategy, which aims to make the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights a concrete reality for everyone. Within this framework, the Union

has also launched the programme Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV, 2021-2027). The programme aims to support and develop open and democratic, rights-based, just and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. The aim is to promote a dynamic and autonomous civil society that fosters democratic, civic and social participation of citizens, and that cultivates the rich diversity of European society on the basis of shared values, history and memory. The programme is primarily aimed at civil society organisations active at local, regional, national and transnational level, which can receive funding from CERV for initiatives aimed at involving citizens in issues of equality, rights, gender equality and the fight against gender and child abuse.

### 1.3 THE EU AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBALLY

As we have seen, the European Union also acts in accordance with its founding values in its external relations. With regard to countries that are not members of the EU, it adopts an attitude of respect and application of human rights. To this end, the Union has adopted specific guidelines for initiating human rights dialogues with third countries. The purpose of these dialogues may be to discuss and cooperate on human rights issues in multinational organisations such as the United Nations, or to gather information and raise concerns on human rights issues. The decision to initiate a dialogue with a third country is taken by the Council, where the Working Group for Human Rights (COHOM) is established.

The decision to initiate a dialogue is based on a prior assessment of the human rights situation in the country covered by the European programme and takes into account several factors (e.g. the attitude of the government of the country concerned towards human rights and civil society).

#### **COHOM - Human Rights Group**

The Working Group on Human Rights deals with the human rights aspects of the EU's external relations and supports the Council's decision-making process in this area. Its main task is to help identify the EU's strategic priorities on thematic and specific geographical issues. The Group also coordinates the positions of EU Member States on thematic and geographical issues in multilateral human rights fora such as the UN General Assembly (Third Committee) and the UN Human Rights Council. The Group also promotes the development of EU human rights and democracy policy and oversees its implementation worldwide. This includes EU human rights guidelines and human rights dialogues and consultations with third countries.

The issues that the Union can address in the Dialogues with third countries are:



- The implementation of international human rights instruments;
- The fight against the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatment and all forms of discrimination;
- Children's rights (especially in armed conflicts);
- Women's rights;
- Freedom of expression;
- The role of civil society and the protection of human rights defenders;
- International cooperation in the field of international justice (in particular with the International Criminal Court);
- The promotion of democratisation and good governance; conflict prevention and the rule of law.

The dialogue is evaluated every two years, and a decision is taken on whether or not to continue it. In this process, the EU may raise one or more cases with the third country, requesting a response and the release of the detainees. The EU currently has dialogues with more than 40 countries. Some of these dialogues are general in nature, based on treaties, agreements and conventions, while others are structured to focus exclusively on human rights. There are also *ad hoc* dialogues covering issues related to the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

#### 1.4 THE EU AND THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

In the current international situation, which is burdened by up to 56 conflicts worldwide, it is important to remember that the EU has also provided guidance on international humanitarian law or the law of war (IHL). IHL is a set of rules governing the conduct of war with the aim of limiting its effects and protecting people not directly involved in the conflict, such as civilians and combatants.

This law applies to armed conflicts both between States and within an individual case,

<b>International humanitarian law: modalities of EU intervention</b>
<p>For its part, the Union intervenes in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political dialogue with third countries, both in times of conflict and peace</li> <li>- General public statements in which the EU advocates respect for humanitarian law</li> <li>- Initiatives and public statements by which the EU condemns specific situations or acts</li> <li>- Restrictive measures and sanctions that may be applied to states or individuals involved in a conflict. Such measures must be proportionate and in accordance with international law.</li> <li>- Cooperation with international organisations</li> <li>- Crisis management operations, which may include missions to gather information useful for the International Criminal Court (ICC) or for the investigation of war crimes</li> <li>- The prosecution of persons responsible for violations of international humanitarian law</li> <li>- Education and training of populations, military personnel and law enforcement officials</li> <li>- The control of arms sales, in accordance with Common Position 2008/944/CFSP, which requires export licences to be linked to the respect of human rights by arms importing countries.</li> </ul>

regardless of the origin of the conflict, and to occupied territories or territories

associated with armed conflicts. Finally, it can be applied in times of peace as well as in times of war. Several actors contribute to the definition of European action in situations of armed conflict. Groups are set up within the Council to work directly with the international organisations concerned, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations and the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission. Given the particular importance of the protection of human rights throughout the world, the European Union appoints a Special representative for human rights. The current representative is Olof Skoog, a Swedish diplomat, who took up his duties on 1 March 2024 for an initial term of two years.

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As we have seen, human rights are at the heart of the European Union's internal and external action. We can say that they permeate all the Union's activities. In fact, the EU even includes the human rights clause in its global trade relations, which states that respect for human rights is an essential element of cooperation with the EU.

However, human and fundamental rights are also binding on Member States by virtue of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), to which they are signatories. Therefore, as we will see in the next chapter, human rights education is an obligation for all components of European civil society (from professionals to civil servants, from law enforcement to entrepreneurs).

## 2. Human Rights Education

*education on human rights, through human rights and for human rights*

*United Nations, 2011*

In the last twenty years, much attention has been paid in Europe to the inclusion of human rights education in school curricula, in the conviction that a proper human rights education at school age is a cornerstone in the growth of individuals as conscious citizens. In the following we will see how the subject has been dealt with at European and Italian level.

### 2.1 TEACHING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EUROPE: THE ROLE OF THE COE

As mentioned above, the member governments of the Council of Europe (COE) signed the Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) on 4 November 1950. Subsequently, in 1985, Recommendation R (85)7 to the member states of the Council of Europe stressed that all young people should learn about human rights as part of their preparation for life in a pluralistic democracy. At the Second Summit of the Council of Europe (1997), the Heads of State and Government of the Member States decided to launch an initiative on education for democratic citizenship with the aim of promoting awareness of their rights as citizens and of their responsibilities in a democratic society, which led to the Human Rights Education (HRE) Programme and the publication of the Compass Handbook, aimed at young people, and later Compasito, aimed at children between the ages of 7 and 13.

In 2000, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the ECHR, the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport launched its Human Rights Education Programme, thanks to which young people and youth organisations have played a central role as educators and defenders of human rights, making a significant contribution to the work of the Council of Europe. Finally, the Council of Europe Charter on Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education was adopted in 2010. The Charter called on Member States to include education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in the curricula

of formal education at pre-school, primary, lower secondary and higher education levels, as well as in vocational education and training. The Charter also invited Member States to promote the role of non-governmental organisations and youth organisations in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education, particularly in the field of non-formal education. Today, the Council of Europe's commitment to human rights is reinforced by the Commissioner for Human Rights, who is responsible for promoting human rights education and awareness, assisting Member States in implementing human rights standards, identifying gaps in law and practice, and providing advice on the protection of human rights in Europe.

In the field of human rights education, the Council of Europe cooperates with other international organisations, including UNESCO, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Community.

#### The United Nations and Human Rights

It is worth noting that the Council of Europe also acted as the regional coordinator for the United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education.

In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, Austria, reaffirmed the fundamental role of human rights education, training and public information in the promotion of human rights.

The following year, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2004, at the end of which a World Programme for Human Rights Education was presented.

The Programme focused on school systems from primary to secondary education. Finally, in December 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, which states:

Everyone has the right to know, seek and receive information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms and should have access to human rights education and training.

Education and training in human rights are essential for promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the principles of universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.

Finally, it gave Member States the primary responsibility for promoting and ensuring education and training in human rights and provided a definition of the concept of human rights education: education on human rights, through human rights and for human rights.

Listed below are some of the Centres that help the Council of Europe to promote human rights in Europe:

- The **European Centre Wergeland**: The Centre, based in Oslo, Norway, is a resource centre working on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. The Centre was established in 2008 as a cooperation project between Norway and the Council of Europe. The main target groups are education professionals, researchers, decision makers and other multipliers;
- The **Youth Department** of the Council of Europe: The Youth Department develops guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European level. It provides financial and educational support for international youth activities aimed at promoting youth citizenship, youth mobility and the values of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to pool and disseminate expertise and knowledge on the situations, aspirations and expressions of young Europeans;
- The **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**: The FRA is a previously mentioned agency that works with the Council of Europe to raise awareness of fundamental rights, including human rights as defined by the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

## 2.2 ITALY'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

As we have seen, the task of promoting human rights education is entrusted to States, which must promote the inclusion of this subject in school curricula, from primary to secondary education. However, before illustrating how human rights education is dealt with in Italy, it is interesting to briefly recall, as we have done for the European Union, Italy's role and commitment in the promotion of human rights at the global level.

### 2.2.1 Italy and Human Rights Worldwide

As a member of the UN Human Rights Council and an EU Member State, Italy is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world. Among the priority issues addressed by our country are the fight against all forms of discrimination; the universal moratorium on the death penalty; the promotion of the rights of women and girls (including campaigns against female genital mutilation and early and forced marriages); the protection and promotion of the rights of the child (especially those in vulnerable situations); the protection of freedom of religion and belief and the rights of members of religious minorities; the fight against trafficking in human beings; the promotion of the rights of disabled persons; the protection of cultural

heritage; the protection of human rights defenders. As part of its international action, Italy participates in or accedes to the following bodies, among others: in the fight against anti-Semitism, Italy has participated in the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) since 1999; it is a party to the United Nations Convention against Organised Crime and its Optional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings and to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (also known as the Warsaw Convention). Italy participates in the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC), an international cooperation platform to promote the exchange of information and best practices on LGBTI rights and is part of the Global Equality Fund (GEF), an international fund established in 2011 on the initiative of the United States to finance projects to protect and promote the rights of LGBTI people. Finally, at the multilateral level, Italy supports initiatives aimed at strengthening the promotion of human rights education, thus contributing to promoting respect for human dignity, fostering the development of a culture of dialogue and mutual understanding and strengthening the effective protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms by State institutions and expressions of civil society.

One of the initiatives on this topic, which combines Italy's international role and the national sphere, is the R2P in schools project. Developed by Italy as part of its mandate in the UN Security Council, the project was launched in January 2018. Implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research (MIUR), the project aims to disseminate the principles of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) in schools, in order to raise awareness among students about the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and the importance of defining and implementing international principles for the protection of civilians.

### 2.2.2 Human Rights Education in Italy

Human Rights Education in Italy is promoted by several institutions and organisations, including the Ministry of Education. Through various decrees and initiatives, the Ministry encourages the integration of Human Rights principles into the school curriculum. In particular, the subject of Human Rights is included in the teaching of Civic Education.



It is worth recalling that in 2019, the cross-curricular teaching of civic education was introduced by Law No. 92/2019. It provided for several thematic cores: the first thematic core was 'Constitution, law (national and international), legality and solidarity'. The second thematic core focused on 'sustainable development, environmental education, knowledge and protection of heritage and territory', while the third core dealt with 'digital citizenship'. Although human rights are not explicitly mentioned, they could be included in the first thematic core or, more generally, in the concept of raising awareness of responsible citizenship. In fact, a lot of leeway was left to teachers and schools. Recently, the Ministry of Education approved the new guidelines for the teaching of civic education (Ministerial Decree No. 183 of 7 September 2024), which came into force with the start of the 2024/2025 school year. Like the previous measure, the new syllabus is divided into core subjects (Constitution, Economic Development and Sustainability, and Digital Citizenship) and includes the term Human Rights in the Constitution section, as below:

#### Primary and secondary schools:

- a) Competence 1: to develop attitudes and adopt behaviours based on respect for each person, individual responsibility, legality, awareness of belonging to a community, participation and solidarity, supported by knowledge of the Constitutional Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the International Declaration of Human Rights.
- b) Objective - Competence 2: to know the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (European Constitution). To know the formation process of the European Union, the spirit of the Treaty of Rome, the composition of the Union, the European institutions and their functions. To identify the articles in the Constitution that regulate international relations. To know the main international bodies, in particular the UN and the content of the international Declarations of human rights and children's rights and to trace their consistency with the principles of the Constitution; identify their application or violation in experience or in known or studied circumstances.

#### Secondary school

- a) Competence 1: to develop attitudes and adopt behaviours based on respect for each person, individual responsibility, legality, awareness of belonging to a community, participation and solidarity, supported by knowledge of the Constitutional Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the International Declaration of Human Rights;
- b) Objective - Competence 2: Identify, through the comparative analysis of the Italian Constitution, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the International Charters of the United Nations and other International Organisations (e.g. COE), the common principles of responsibility, freedom, solidarity, protection of human

rights, health, private property, protection of cultural and artistic heritage, animals and the environment. Trace national and international organisations and standards that deal with these issues. Participate indirectly or directly with actions within one's reach.

More clearly than in the past, the Italian school is therefore called upon to play a crucial role in the promotion and dissemination of Human Rights. Moreover, as the COE has well emphasised, the school operates as a starting point for educating the new generations in equality, respect, dignity and awareness. It is through its daily action that it ends up helping students to become aware adults and promoters of concrete changes in society.

However, given the nature of the measure, which only provides guidelines on human rights and is therefore only a guideline that is not immediately operational, Italian teachers may find themselves in difficulties or in a situation where they have to rely on human rights education programmes developed by other actors and institutions (see the note in the margin of this paragraph). Given the complexity and importance of the issue of human rights education, we wanted to explore the ways in which Italian teachers deal with the issue of human rights education, also by organising specific focus groups. In the next chapter, we summarise some of the aspects that emerged from the Third Good Practice Report Human Rights Education and Good Practices, which was prepared and published as part of the activities of the JM ActEuR Module project.

Note:

Among the various actors working on human rights issues, with educational programmes and events specifically designed for schoolchildren are:

- **Amnesty International Italia** offers educational projects for schools, teachers and professionals. These projects aim to teach about, through and for human rights, providing free resources and training to carry out meetings, workshops and lessons.
- **Centro di Ateneo per i Diritti Umani - University of Padua**, which organises the online training course Teaching Human Rights for teachers of all levels to strengthen their skills in teaching human rights to their students.
- **United for Human Rights**, which provides free educational materials such as DVDs and teacher information kits to facilitate the inclusion of human rights in the school curriculum.
- **Coordinamento Nazionale Docenti per i Diritti Umani (National Coordination of Teachers for Human Rights)**, which proposes projects and educational events on human rights for schools.
- **Council of Europe** promotes human rights education in school systems, focusing on primary and secondary education..

The main innovations introduced by the New Guidelines for the Teaching of Civic Education
<a href="https://www.mim.gov.it/-/scuola-pronte-le-nuove-linee-guida-del-ministero-dell-istruzione-e-del-merito-per-l-insegnamento-dell-educazione-civica-valditara-valorizzati-principi">https://www.mim.gov.it/-/scuola-pronte-le-nuove-linee-guida-del-ministero-dell-istruzione-e-del-merito-per-l-insegnamento-dell-educazione-civica-valditara-valorizzati-principi</a>
<p>The centrality of the human person, the fundamental subject of history, in whose service the State is placed, is emphasised. Hence the promotion of the talents of every pupil and the culture of respect for every human being. Hence the constitutional values of solidarity and freedom and the concept of democracy itself, which our Constitution does not associate by chance with the sovereignty of the people and which, to be authentic, presupposes the rule of law. Hence also the functionality of society for the development of each individual (and not vice versa) and the primacy of the human being over any ideological concept;</p> <p>Training is promoted in the awareness of a common Italian identity as part of European and Western civilisation and its history. Consequently, the link between the sense of citizenship and the sense of belonging to the national community defined as the homeland, a concept expressly recalled and strengthened by the Constitution, is emphasised. By strengthening the sense of belonging to a national community, which finds its reference in the constitutional values, the integration of foreign students is also to be promoted. At the same time, the promotion of territories and knowledge of local cultures and histories promotes a broader and more authentic awareness of national culture and history. In this context, membership of the European Union is in keeping with the original spirit of the founding treaty, which aims to promote cooperation between countries that share common values and general interests;</p> <p>Along with rights, duties towards the community are also emphasised, which Article 2 of the Constitution defines as 'mandatory duties of political, economic and social solidarity'. The importance of also developing a culture of duties makes it necessary to teach respect for the rules that form the basis of an ordered society, in order to foster civil coexistence, so that law prevails and not arbitrariness. Hence the fundamental importance of individual responsibility that cannot be replaced by social responsibility;</p> <p>Promotion of the enterprise culture, which, besides being an expression of a feeling of self-determination, is increasingly in demand in order to meet today's social challenges and transformations. At the same time, private economic initiative and private property, which, as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union so aptly defines, is an essential element of individual freedom, are valued for the first time;</p> <p>Education to combat all forms of crime and illegality. In particular, the fight against crime against the person, against public and private property, through learning, from the earliest grades of school, individual behaviour that can counter these phenomena;</p> <p>The importance of economic growth while respecting the environment and the quality of life of citizens is emphasised;</p> <p>Education in respect for all public goods, starting with school facilities, urban decorum and the protection of Italy's rich cultural, artistic and monumental heritage;</p> <p>Promotion of health and correct lifestyles, starting with diet, sporting activity and personal psychophysical well-being. In this context, particular attention is paid to combating addictions deriving from drugs, smoking, alcohol, doping, pathological use of the web, gaming and gambling;</p> <p>Road traffic education, to get young people used to respecting the rules of the road, which translates into respect for their own and others' lives;</p> <p>The culture of respect for women is strengthened and promoted;</p> <p>Promotion of financial and insurance education, savings education and retirement planning, also as a time to enhance and protect private wealth;</p> <p>Enhancement of the work culture as a fundamental concept of our society to be taught as early as the first cycle of education;</p> <p>Education in the ethical use of the digital, to carefully evaluate what one 'delivers' of oneself to the net (...)</p>

### 3. Teaching Human Rights: A Case Study

The Third Report on Good Practices *Human Rights Education and Good Practices*<sup>1</sup>, which is presented here as an extreme synthesis, is the result of three years of meetings on human rights (JM Module ActEuR - Roundtables<sup>2</sup>) in secondary schools and of a research carried out through Focus Groups on the ways of teaching human rights (Human Rights Education) in secondary schools, with a special focus on the difficulties encountered by the teachers interviewed in teaching and finding information and working materials on human rights and fundamental rights of the European Charter of Rights.

The choice of the focus group as research technique is linked to the exploratory nature of our study and the particular nature of the research object. The focus group, with its emphasis on dialogical confrontation, is a particularly appropriate research tool in cases where the research topic is particularly relevant, but little addressed/discussed, such as that of shared good practices in human rights education.

#### 3.1 FOCUS GROUP: EDUCATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Secondary school teachers participated in the Focus Group. The Focus participants are teachers of Law, Literature and History and Philosophy. The following is only a brief extract followed by some considerations.

*Question: What is your experience in teaching human rights?*

Teacher 1: My training has been very varied, I have also had experience abroad, in even extreme situations abroad. I have also taught in prisons. So in short, let's say that the subject of human rights is of particular interest to me.

Teacher 2: I teach law. My career path did not start in the school, it started at the Court of Auditors and then within the school I had a break at the Administrative Court. Human rights, about which we never know enough, let's say that they should be our daily bread

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<sup>1</sup> Please see: Third Report on Good Practices – Education on Human Rights and Good Practices. ActEuR Jean Monnet Module – Center for European Studies, DiSPS/Unisa.  
<https://www.centrostudieuropei.it/acteur/acteur-quality-reports/>.

<sup>2</sup> Please see: <https://www.centrostudieuropei.it/acteur/>.

and I must say that they are very often the subject I am asked about by the children who do Catholic Religion as an alternative subject. (...)

Teacher 3: (...) We are there on values, but I think, in my case, I have to change a bit, on methodologies, I have to find out which methodologies to use better for myself and for the children. At the moment I feel very much in crisis, precisely with respect to rights, precisely with respect to how we can make an impact. We may not have the problems that there are in Hungary, but we do have problems and we are in a difficult historical moment. (...) We have direct contact with the pain of the children, who sometimes know how to express it, sometimes they don't (...) I think that right now we need to think not only about how to present human rights to children but how to invent new things. (...)

Teacher 4: I teach literature and Latin and the subject of human rights is being dealt with in a cross-curricular manner with my colleague in civic education. It was a pleasant surprise that my colleague introduced the topic of the right to life and therefore euthanasia and abortion. The students were very interested in these topics and I realised that interfacing with a colleague (...) created a very positive feedback.

Teacher 5: I teach history and philosophy. So, the issue of rights, the issue of rights is transversal, as you said. Obviously teaching philosophy, for me it is something important. We have conquered rights. The problem is that they are not fixed in time, we risk losing them and therefore we have to defend them with gritted teeth. And I notice that we are in a phase where some rights we have won are at risk, so I work a lot on this. But I notice that the young people on this issue are sleepy, they do not shake, so they take it for granted (...)

*Question: What tools do you adopt in teaching human rights? Conceptual or experiential?*

NB: everyone answers 'both', but they only talk about the experiential tools.

Teacher 4: You can start, for example, this morning we read in class the newspaper article about the events in Pisa [clashes between students and the police in Pisa]. From this reading came the right to freedom of thought. Many did not really know what it meant.

(...) I complain about too much virtual presence, too little associative presence, too little political awareness. This frightens me. (...)

Teacher 3: For example, last week, on the day of the school-family meeting, Giorgio Perlasca's son was here at the [Theatre] Ghirelli and so we thought of sending some students, a delegation of our pupils. (...) That was an experience of listening, of meeting a person who had experienced, logically indirectly, the violation of rights through the figure of the father. The problem is that most of the boys do not live the experience. (...)

*Question: In your experience, in a hypothetical ranking, what is the main tool for teaching human rights in schools? Conceptual, experiential also understood as meeting the protagonists of events or representatives of associations working in the field of human rights?*

Nb: everyone agrees that the first tool is the experiential one.

Teacher 1: Definitely meeting with associations is also important.

Teacher 4: First you have to show pictures, then the debate.

Teacher 2: Since they [the students] are children of images, the image must be strong, captivating. Then afterwards comes the discussion.

Teacher 4: Yes because if the concept is presented first, it is far from them.

*Question: Do you know and/or have you ever used the Compass tool created by the Council of Europe for the teaching of Human Rights?*

NB: all answer no.

*Question: Do you know and/or have you ever used human rights education tools/programmes/kits developed by Research Centres, Associations or Institutes dealing with Human Rights?*

NB: all answer no.



NB: In greetings, everyone spontaneously agreed that it was a constructive discussion.

### 3.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

As can be seen from this brief excerpt, all the teachers participating in the Focus Group opted for an experiential approach to the teaching of Human Rights: reading a newspaper, watching a film, attending a news event, meeting a witness, followed by a possible debate. The reason seems to lie in the fact that all teachers agree that their students are too addicted to social media and images and are not able to grapple with the concepts in the first place.

The participating teachers share the idea that their students consider rights as acquired, that they do not feel the need to open a constructive confrontation with their classmates. Only when confronted with strong images, the teachers emphasise, do the students seem to wake up.

And yet it emerges that while they recognise their role as teachers in human rights education as fundamental, they sometimes seem to feel powerless or inadequate.

Finally, the teachers who participated in the Focus declare that they do not use programmes or kits for Human Rights Education developed by Institutions and Associations, nor do they seek their collaboration in the first place. In general, as emerges from the Focus, there is little or no knowledge of the training and information tools made available by the Council of Europe.

## **4. The Future of Human Rights Education: Shared good practices for Italian Schools**

As can be seen from the Quality Report on ActEuR Jean Monnet Module Activities (Third Year 2024)<sup>3</sup> in total, this third year alone we have met with around 300 students and 10

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<sup>3</sup> Please see: Third Report on Good Practices – Education on Human Rights and Good Practices. ActEuR Jean Monnet Module – Center for European Studies, DiSPS/Unisa.  
<https://www.centrostudieuropei.it/acteur/acteur-quality-reports/>

teachers from the secondary school. Over the three years of the ActEuR module, we have reached more than 1,000 students and many teachers have joined us, with whom we have also developed a very fruitful collaboration. Generally, after attending the seminars, students were asked to submit a paper (Power Point, essay, video, concept map, etc.) on one or more of the topics discussed. Many students used their papers for their final diploma discussion, demonstrating their keen interest in European Union and human rights issues.

We have thus become fully aware that the school is the place to take up the challenge of building conscious European citizens. These students, the 'native Europeans'<sup>4</sup>, if well guided and supported by teachers who are themselves enthusiastic and equipped with specific tools, can develop a critical and constructive attitude towards the European Union and the challenges it constantly faces.

Now, as we have seen in the previous chapters, the subject of Human Rights Education is crucial in the formation of an aware citizen; at the same time, it requires articulated knowledge ranging from history to law and, above all, it requires adequate knowledge of European institutions and their functioning, of European founding values and the concept of European citizenship.

As far as Italian schools are concerned, as we have mentioned, the subject of Human Rights Education is included in the teaching of Civic Education and the Ministerial Guidelines only provide a mere guideline in terms of competences and objectives to be achieved that is not immediately operational, so the Italian teachers may find themselves in difficulties or have to rely on human rights education programmes developed by other subjects and institutions.

As it turned out, however, all the teachers in the focus group opted for an experiential approach to teaching human rights: reading a newspaper, watching a film, attending a news event, meeting a witness, followed by a possible debate. The reason for this seems to be that students are too addicted to social media and images to engage with the concepts. In addition, students seem to regard rights as acquired and do not feel the

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<sup>4</sup> Benocci B, Verderame D (2020). *Native Europeans and European Memories. The Building of a European consciousness among young people*. De Europa, vol 3, no 2/2020 pp. 91 -105.

need to engage in constructive discussion with their classmates. It is only when confronted with powerful images, teachers point out, that pupils seem to wake up. Finally, although they recognise their role as teachers in human rights education as fundamental, they sometimes feel powerless or inadequate. Finally, it is interesting to note that these teachers do not use programmes or kits for human rights education developed by institutions and associations, nor do they seek their cooperation. In general, as the Focus shows, there is little or no awareness of the training and information tools provided by the Council of Europe.

The Italian school is called upon play a crucial role in the promotion and dissemination of Human Rights. Moreover, as both the COE and the United Nations have well emphasised, the school acts as a starting point for educating the new generations in equality, respect, dignity and awareness; through its daily actions it ultimately helps students to become aware adults and promoters of concrete changes in society. At present, however, the way Human Rights Education is conceived in the Italian school, i.e. included in the Civic Education teaching, as a mere guideline and without operational aids, it ends up becoming the exclusive prerogative of the choices made by the teacher, who in turn is in difficulty in presenting such an important, articulated and diriment theme to the students for the formation of individuals.

The hope is that it will be the teachers, on the strength of their experience, but assisted by experts and supported by the existing tools on Human Rights Education, who will create the basis for a discussion/debate, capable of starting the definition and identification of shared Good Practices in Human Rights Education for Italian schools.

Aware that human rights education has never been more fundamental than in this historical period, we hope that this guide, born from the enthusiasm of the teachers and students we have met over the years, a guide that we wanted to be brief, *exhaustive but flexible*, can be a tool to accompany the teaching of human rights in first and second grade high schools.

## Bibliographic Resources for Schools

**JEAN MONNET ACTEUR MODULE – CES, DISPS/UNISA**

- <https://www.centrostudieuropei.it/acteur/>

### Documents

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/italian>  
  
[https://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg18/file/DICHIARAZIONE\\_diritti\\_umani\\_4lingue.pdf](https://www.senato.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg18/file/DICHIARAZIONE_diritti_umani_4lingue.pdf)
- **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_it.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_it.pdf)
- **European Convention**
- **Human Rights** [https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_Rom.pdf](https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_Rom.pdf)
- [https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention\\_ita](https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_ita)
- <https://www.echr.coe.int/european-convention-on-human-rights>
- **Council of Europe Charter on Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education**  
<https://rm.coe.int/1680482511>

### Institutions and Research Centres

- **European Union**  
[https://european-union.europa.eu/index\\_it](https://european-union.europa.eu/index_it)
- **United Nations**  
<https://unric.org/it/>
- **Council of Europe:**  
<https://www.coe.int/>
- **European Centre Wergeland**  
<https://theewc.org/>
- **Center for European studies Disps/Unisa**  
<https://www.centrostudieuropei.it/>

## Associations, Foundations, Centres and Institutions dealing with Human Rights

- **University Centre for Human Rights - University of Padua:**  
<https://www.dirittiumani.unipd.it/>
- **Teachers' Coordination for Human Rights**  
[https://coordinamentodirittiumani.eu/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://coordinamentodirittiumani.eu/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- **Amnesty International Italy**  
<https://www.amnesty.ch/it/educazione-ai-diritti-umani>
- **United for Human Rights**  
<https://www.unitiperidirittiumani.it/>
- **Youth for Human Rights**  
<https://it.youthforhumanrights.org/about-us.html>
- **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/IT/legal-content/summary/european-union-agency-for-fundamental-rights-fra.html?fromSummary=13>
- **Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/IT/legal-content/summary/advisory-committee-on-equal-opportunities-for-men-and-women.html?fromSummary=13>
- **European Institute for Gender Equality**  
<https://eige.europa.eu/>
- **CNR - Research Institute on Innovation and Development Services**  
<https://www.iriss.cnr.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/principi-guida-su-imprese-e-diritti-umani-con-commentario.pdf>

## Sites of interest

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Italy and Human Rights)**  
[https://www.esteri.it/it/politica-estera-e-cooperazione-allo-sviluppo/temi\\_globali/diritti\\_umani/litalia\\_e\\_i\\_diritti\\_umani/](https://www.esteri.it/it/politica-estera-e-cooperazione-allo-sviluppo/temi_globali/diritti_umani/litalia_e_i_diritti_umani/)
- **Ministry of Education and Merit (civic education teaching guidelines 2024/2025)**  
<https://www.mim.gov.it/-/scuola-pronte-le-nuove-linee-guida-del-ministero-dell-istruzione-e-del-merito-per-l-insegnamento-dell-educazione-civica-valditara-valorizzati-principi>  
<https://www.mim.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Linee+guida+Educazione+civica.pdf/9ffd1e06-db57-1596-c742-216b3f42b995?t=1725710190643>  
[https://www.istruzione.it/educazione\\_civica/](https://www.istruzione.it/educazione_civica/)

- **European Union - Putting the Charter of Fundamental Rights into Practice**  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/IT/legal-content/summary/putting-the-charter-of-fundamental-rights-into-practice.html?fromSummary=13>
- **European Commission - Programme Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values**  
[https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-overview\\_it](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-overview_it)
- **European Union - EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law**  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-guidelines-on-the-promotion-of-compliance-with-international-humanitarian-law.html?fromSummary=13>
- **European Union - EU guidelines on human rights dialogues with non-EU**  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-guidelines-on-human-rights-dialogues-with-non-eu-countries.html?fromSummary=13>
- **European Council - Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)**  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/working-party-human-rights/>
- **European Union External Action - 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World Annual Report**  
[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2023-human-rights-and-democracy-world-annual-report-report-eu-high-representative-foreign-affairs\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2023-human-rights-and-democracy-world-annual-report-report-eu-high-representative-foreign-affairs_en)

Please note: all links have been verified as of 31 January 2025.



Nurturing a culture of Human Rights through the School was one of the commitments promoted and implemented in the framework of the activities of the Jean Monnet Module of Excellence Activating EU Rights: Past and Present of Fundamental Human Rights - ActEuR (2022-2025), coordinated by Prof. Dario Verderame of the University of Salerno.

The ActEuR Module is a project co-funded by the European Union for the three-year period 2022-2025 within the framework of the Erasmus Plus - Jean Monnet Activities programme, which aims to support activities of excellence in teaching and research on topics related to the European integration process. The ActEuR Module is also part of the activities promoted by the Centre for European Studies - DiSPS at the University of Salerno.

Throughout the three-year project, the main objective of the Module was to deepen knowledge and raise awareness of the threats to human and fundamental rights at the European level. This objective was pursued through a socio-historical perspective that adopts the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU) as a frame of reference. The Charter represented the instrument through which the ActEuR project aimed to link past and present forms of violations/threats to the rights of dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizenship and justice as fundamental values of the EU.

Over the last three years, more than a thousand students from secondary schools in the Salerno area, accompanied by their teachers, have been able to participate in the activities of the ActEuR Roundtables dedicated to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. The methodology used consisted of flanking the classical frontal teaching with *Cooperative learning* and *Learning by doing*. In this way, students were trained to become trainers/disseminators of good practices in the field for Human Rights.

Aware that human rights education has never been more fundamental than in this historical period, we hope that this guide, born from the enthusiasm of the teachers and students we have met over the years, a guide that we wanted to be brief, *exhaustive but flexible*, can be a tool to accompany the teaching of human rights in first and second grade high schools.