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| **Laws, policies and programs that have been developed by local authorities explicitly to promote and protect human rights, including those related to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations**The UN-world Conference on Human Rights took place in Vienna (1993) and as a result, the Vienna Program of Action for fundamental role of cities and regions in promoting and protecting of human rights was adopted. On the 20th anniversary of this conference, Vienna started a participative process. The two-year process reaffirmed the constructive role of the city as well as of the different stakeholders, NGOs and civil society in taking responsibility for upholding and promoting of human rights. The resolution of the municipal council of December 2014 and the Declaration of Vienna to the “City of Human Rights” was the highlight of the process. The United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Union´s human rights treaties and charters set forth in the declaration and serve as the basis for the engagement of Vienna in mobilizing other cities in taking human rights into their agenda. The establishment of the “Human Rights office” was an important step for more visibility of the commitment of the city to human rights. In addition to implementing of the Vienna’s Declaration, setting standards on the rights of the child, security and safety, measures against human trafficking and rooting of a culture of human rights in the society are the main areas of action of this office. International cooperation and networking are essential for the work of the Human Rights Office. Sharing best practices with human rights cities in Austria, Europe and beyond enables all stakeholders to learn from one another and to address identical or similar challenges together and find common solutions.Implementation of a human rights based policy frameworkIt means a functioning multi-level governance and cooperation of the local authorities, local actors and individuals for taking measures for developing of policies. Participation, non-discrimination and equality, accountability and transparency are four pillars of the human rights based Approach that Vienna takes as the fundament of its activities for realization of human rights. Promotion of a human rights culture Organizing of conferences, seminars and panel discussions with different target groups as, seniors, youth, refuges and public servants and establishing of a long-term collaboration with the Vienna`s Schools authority are examples for consciousness and capacity building. Meanwhile, the Human Rights Office has trained and educated more than 10.000 pupils with different methods (especially through arts and culture). Training of public servants, teachers and other professional groups is an important milestone of promotion of human rights culture. Several educational programs, such as Vienna.Knowledge.Diversity (Wien.Wissen.Vielfalt) provide lectures for everyone in the society and debates on topics such as immigration, diversity and human rights.Providing civic space and dialogue with civil society The Human Rights Office contacts initiatives and grassroots organizations and opens new forms of participation for implementing of the human rights based approach. The often-used form is the Round Table format, which encourage involvement of administration staff, NGOs, civil society and other stakeholders. The “Human Rights District” is another unique example of active engagement of representatives of civil society and by now (April 2022), 12 out of 23 Viennese districts have declared themselves as a district committed to human rights. The districts identify their themes and stakeholders and in cooperation prioritize their plans for action and the Human Rights Office supports them through the process by knowledge transfer and linking the day-to-day activities of the districts to human rights.Institutional provisionsVienna considers human rights as a crosscutting approach and integrates them in the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) or within the framework of the “Smart City” concept.A steering group with representatives of the city government acts as an advisory board and provides the Human Rights Office with strategic advices in setting of the agenda and in implementation of the declaration of the city. The Human Rights Office also coordinates the reports the City of Vienna submits to international organizations, which verify compliance with human rights conventions and treaties and issue recommendations on how to best implement human rights.Another task of the Office is to examine bills of law for conformity with fundamental rights and human rights and submit relevant comments.  Right to Equality and Non-DiscriminationVienna, as a human rights city pursues the human rights-based approach and has adapted important pieces of legislation on equal treatment and non-discrimination and established institutions to promote equal treatment and equality for everyone living in Vienna especially in relation to sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, parentage, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability and age. In 1998, the Vienna Anti-Discrimination office for **LGBTIQ** Matters was founded. For combating of discriminations in every day’s life, the staff of this office advice, educate and sensitize the population through organizing of events and carrying out of projects and thus makes a great contribution to acoexistence free of discrimination.**Gender equality** is a success story in Vienna and spans almost three decades. The political message is clear and simple: In Vienna, every woman should be able to lead a self-determined and independent life. This commitment will be supported also by budget allocation. A gender perspective and gender checks have been part of the entire budgeting process of the city since 2005. It means all city departments have to check their activities and areas of work for gender relevance twice a year. This is stipulated by decree and is obligatory. An equality support structure has been in place since 1992, with a Women’s Department, a Gender Mainstreaming section settled at the Chief Executive Office, and a Gender Budgeting unit as part of the Finance Department. Vienna has about 2 million inhabitants. More than 42% of them have come from a different country; mostly have lived for a long time or even been born in Austria. The aim of Vienna’s integration and diversity policy is to enable everybody, no matter where they come from or what their first language is, to participate in society with equal rights and opportunities. The City of Vienna has numerous measures and programs in place to support **immigrants or refugees** and their children to settle down quickly in Vienna and to contribute their knowledge and skills for the benefit of society as a whole. The City of Vienna works to counter prejudice and discrimination, fostering dialogue and respectful interaction. It promotes a science-based approach towards a critical analysis and debate of the opportunities and challenges that come with migration and diversity. The Integration and Diversity Monitor report is published every three years to show how processes towards equality and improvement develop, both within the city administration and within society, and to ensure that debates in politics, administration, media and society are put on a factual footing. The City of Vienna is also responsible for the administrative proceedings for conferring Austrian citizenship or granting residence permits. **Challenges faced by local authorities and promising practices, to promote and protect human rights, including in relation to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations.**Awareness towards the right to equality and non-discrimination of vulnerable and marginalized persons is not pronounced clearly in practicing of support and protection mechanism of governments. All-governmental levels have the duty and obligation to implement, protect and promote human rights but it is not internalized widely especially at the local level. Human rights cities are self-proclaimed cities, which express their commitment to fulfilling human rights. Generally, limited knowledge is available on this initiative and on their important contribution. The newly launched framework for human rights cities in the EU is an important milestone towards having concrete and practical benchmarks for human rights cities on implementing human rights. This framework could be expanded on a global level to focus on the work of cities beyond the EU. In addition, lack of dialogue and exchange between the national and local/regional levels to discuss the implementation of international obligations is an issue that urgently should be improved. This topic does not apply to Vienna, since Vienna is a city and one of Austria's nine federal states.Member states should be further encouraged to discuss human rights implementation with sub-levels of government, the NHRI (National Human Rights Institutes) etc. The United Nations and especially the OHCHR could develop further incentives for member states and NHRIs for more engagement of the local authorities.International recognition and accreditation of human rights cities and mainstreaming of their practices can be an important incentive for both rights-holders and duty-bearers with the aim of helping rights-holders claim their rights and to encourage duty-bearers to meet their obligations. **Key principles that should guide local and national governments in the promotion and protection of human rights.** * Awareness raising towards the role and obligation of local governments in fulfillment of human rights and ensuring that human rights in a broad and holistic sense is part of local and national governments discussions and not only the thematic human rights issues
* Strengthening the link between human rights and the SDGs
* Recognizing and formalizing of the concept “human rights cities” in protection, promotion, implementation and guaranteeing of human rights
* Assist to systematizing cities’ activities for developing of structural definition of human rights standards and accountability mechanisms
* Facilitating the exchange among cities, since they have a few occasions to exchange on methods and tools to implement human rights

Re-activation and continuing of the dialog between the OHCHR and cities- Call for a new meeting following the 2018 one that took place in Geneva. |
| **Shams ASADI**Human Rights Commissioner |