



Ionad na hÉireann do Chearta an Duine  
Irish Centre for Human Rights



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Ghent University's Eureast Platform – Irish Centre for Human Rights  
in collaboration with the Elena Bonner School of Human Rights

# ONLINE SCHOOL ON HUMAN RIGHTS 2024



3 September - 10 October

## BRIDGING PERSPECTIVES: HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUES BETWEEN RUSSIA AND EUROPE

### The Future of Human Rights in Russia and the Challenges of European Fundamental Rights

Since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russian civic space has shrunk with the final shutdown of independent media and NGOs. This evolution affected the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, who now have no legal guarantees to be protected from the authorities' abuse of power. Although Russia is far from adopting a democratic trajectory, it is crucial to assess the current state of human rights in the country and to explore the avenues it can take when the war ends.

On the other hand, the European Union (EU), having passed through the history of wars and conflicts, has transformed into a Union founded on the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. In this regard, the EU has valuable insights to offer. However, the EU itself is facing a number of challenges, starting from climate change, which has repercussions on human rights, to the backsliding of democracies. In the end, the question is whether the European Union has as many powers as obligations to forge the observance of human rights. Those questions are intertwined into what can be an interesting comparative perspective of two human rights systems.

With this approach in mind, Ghent University's Eureast Platform together with the Irish Centre for Human Rights and School of Law at the University of Galway, and in collaboration with the Elena Bonner School of Human Rights, are launching an Online School on Human Rights 2024. This project is supported by the European Commission Foreign Policy Instrument initiative 'EU Public Diplomacy - Russia'.

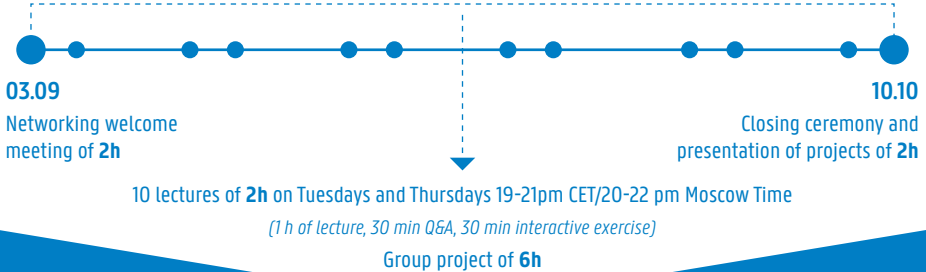
This Online School will welcome both Russian and European students and invite them to delve into human rights issues from two perspectives. First, the School will present an outlook on the deteriorating state of affairs of human rights in Russia with its root causes and repercussions. Second, as for the European perspective, the School will provide an opportunity to examine the human rights construction in the European Union, focusing on climate change, migration, democracy and human rights nexuses. The program will also encompass a historical analysis of the transition to democracy and the restoration of human rights safeguards in some European countries.

This Online School offers a unique opportunity for European and Russian students to exchange views on critical human rights issues. In the current context, where institutional contacts with Russian universities and students are limited, this School will provide a valuable space for such interactions.



## Programme

30 academic hours (5 ECTS)



## Format

The Online School will start in September 2024 and run for 6 weeks.

The lectures will be held online twice a week.

The language of instruction will be English.

## Group Project

Participants will be divided into 6 groups, each consisting of 5 students.

Each group will conduct research and present a 10-minute project on one of the following topics:

Human Rights in the EU and Russia: A Comparative Perspective

A Specific Dimension of Human Rights in Russia or the EU



## Participants

The Online School is open to final-year Bachelor's, Master's, and first-year PhD students from Russia and Europe who are interested in human rights issues in the Russian and European contexts. Participation is free of charge.



## Selection

Participants will be selected based on their motivation and prior experience in human rights. The ratio of Russian to EU students will be 1:1.



## Certificate

Upon the completion of the lectures and implementation of the group project, the participants will be given the certificates issued by Ghent University. The School workload is equivalent to 3 ECTS (*upon the recognition of students' host universities*).

To qualify for the certificate, participants must attend and actively engage in 9 lectures and complete the group project.



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ELENA BONNER  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
SCHOOL



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# ONLINE SCHOOL ON HUMAN RIGHTS 2024

3 September - 10 October

3 September

Networking  
Welcome  
Meeting

## Cluster 1 | Human Rights in Russia: Lecture 1/5 September | New Heights of Repressions

### Modern Russia: a Reversal from Human Rights to Traditional Values

Speaker: **Dr. Natasza Krawczuk**

Dr. Natasza Krawczuk is a iSANS senior researcher and lawyer. She has administered and coordinated projects and worked as a lawyer for the Memorial Human Rights Center, the Moscow Helsinki Group, and the European Roma Rights Center (Budapest). She was an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Policy at the Higher School of Economics (Moscow), lecturer at the Department of International Law and the Department of Continuous Education of Judges at the Russian State University of Justice, and a leading researcher in the Department of Legal Research at the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences.



For decades, Russia has been a member of the UN Human Rights Council and a party to global and regional human rights treaties. Russia's implementation of the recommendations of the UN bodies and the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights led to a significant improvement of Russian legislation and the abolishment of law enforcement practices that violated international human rights standards. It could be stated that there was a steady, although not smooth, movement of Russia towards ensuring human rights and the rule of law.

The country's rapid turn from human rights to 'traditional values' over the past few years has nullified all achievements in the field of human rights and the rule of law. Domestic violence, impunity for certain categories of citizens, and political persecution do not seem to cause discontent among the population and do not lead to confrontation between society and the authorities. How did the paradigm of 'traditional values' manage to replace the system of values based on human rights in such a short time? Do other states, who also emphasize values, manage to combine these values with respect for human rights, and if so, how? Will it be possible to balance human rights and traditional values in Russia?

## Cluster 2 | Human Rights from the European Lecture 2 / 10 September | perspective: a beacon of hope?

### Human Rights in Europe and its Institutions: Between Powers and Obligations

Speaker: **Dr. Joyce De Coninck**

Dr. Joyce De Coninck is a post-doctoral researcher affiliated with Ghent University and a Scholar in Residence at the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University (NYC). She is currently working on developing a model of relational human rights responsibility to effectively apportion human rights responsibility stemming from hybrid forms of cooperation involving state actors and non-state actors such as international organizations and private entities.



This session will trace the origins and the development of human rights concepts in Europe, analysing philosophical foundations and the impact of significant historical events. The post-World War II era highlighted the creation of pivotal documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The era has marked the establishment of influential bodies like the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights.

The European Union fully embraced the human rights as one of the essential principles of its existence only with Maastricht treaty. However, the integration of the EU in the wider European human rights context still poses a lot of challenges: the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union being a part and parcel of the EU's legal order is still at odds with the European Convention on Human Rights which prevents the EU from being a part of the latter treaty. Is the EU as much advanced in its 'powers' in exercising the human rights as in 'obligation' to observe them?

## Cluster 1 | Human Rights in Russia: Lecture 3 / 12 September | New Heights of Repressions

### Prosecution of Russia's War of Aggression against Ukraine and the Limits of International Law

Speaker: **Dr. Gleb Bogush**

Dr. Gleb Bogush is a research fellow at the Institute for International Peace and Security Law, University of Cologne, Germany.



The lecture summarizes the discourse around the investigation and prosecution of the international crimes committed by Russian officials and the Russian military in the war of aggression against Ukraine. The lecture analyses the efforts of states and international institutions to achieve accountability for the crime of aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide allegedly committed in Ukraine and highlights the gaps and limitations of those efforts and mechanisms. Special attention will be given to the central role of the crime of aggression and ongoing debates over the prosecution of this crime through a special international tribunal.



## Cluster 2 | Human Rights from the European Lecture 4 / 17 September | perspective: a beacon of hope?

### Human Rights Restoration in Europe: A Retrospective from Post-Dictatorship Spain and Portugal

Speaker: **Dr. Filipa Raimundo**

Dr. Filipa Raimundo is an Assistant Professor at ISCTE-Lisbon University Institute. She holds a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute. Her research interests include transitional justice, democratisation, and authoritarian legacies. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Democratisation*, *South European Society and Politics*, *Acta Politica*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, and *Mediterranean Politics*. She recently published *Transitional Justice After Clean Breaks. The case of Portugal* (Lexington, 2024).



This lecture provides a historical perspective on the restoration of human rights and the processes of transitional justice in post-dictatorship Spain and Portugal. Following decades of authoritarian rule under Francisco Franco in Spain and António de Oliveira Salazar in Portugal, both countries embarked on transformative journeys towards democracy and human rights restoration in the second half of the 20th century.

This session will explore strategies and mechanisms of transitional justice employed in both countries to address past human rights abuses, including truth commissions, trials, and reparations. The lecture will analyse the successes and limitations of these approaches and the ongoing impact of historical memory on contemporary human rights discourse.

## Cluster 1 | Human Rights in Russia: Lecture 5 / 19 September | New Heights of Repressions

### The Geo-politics of Gender and Sexuality in an Era of EU-Russia Competition

Speaker: **Dr. Laura Luciani**

Dr. Laura Luciani is a postdoctoral researcher at the Ghent Institute for International and European Studies (Ghent University). Her research examines the EU's attempts to transform the countries and (civil) societies of the South Caucasus through the spread of human rights and democracy norms.



Over the past decade, LGBTQIA+ rights have emerged as a site for the (re)production and contestation of global geopolitical hierarchies. Some countries or regional entities such as the European Union have increasingly adopted LGBTQIA+ rights as a signifier of modernity. This is visible in the growing discursive association between 'LGBT-friendliness' and 'Europeanness'. At the same time, other countries including Russia have resisted this development by proposing an alternative value system based on so-called 'traditional values'. In the Russian case, the construction of sexual 'deviance' as a security threat serves to legitimize not only the clampdown on LGBTQIA+ rights and activism domestically (e.g., by outlawing the so-called 'international LGBT movement' as an extremist organisation), but also state aggression. For instance, in a sermon he gave in March 2022, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow justified Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine with the need to defend the Donbas from Western-sponsored Pride marches. The lecture will unpack the geo-political logics that drive both the European Union's protection/promotion of LGBTQIA+ rights and Russia's resistance to these norms. Moreover, it will discuss the implications that these processes have for LGBTQIA+ lives and activism in Europe, Russia, and in their neighbourhood.

## Cluster 2 | Human Rights from the European Lecture 6 / 24 September | perspective: a beacon of hope?

### The Nexus between Democracy, Human Rights and Peace

Speaker: **Dr. Alina Cherviatsova**

Dr. Alina Cherviatsova is as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at the Human Rights Centre, Ghent University. Prior to this, Dr. Cherviatsova was an Associate Professor for comparative public law, human rights, and international law of the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Ukraine) and a coordinator of three Jean Monnet Modules. Her research interests include international law, comparative constitutional law, human rights, with a special emphasis on freedom of speech, legal regulation of collective memories (memorial laws), Soviet and post-Soviet studies.



Democracy, while imperfect, is considered the best system for protecting individual liberties, constraining abuses of power, and ensuring accountability of government. A world with fewer democracies risks being less free, less stable, and less equipped to tackle global threats. This lecture will explore the complex relationship between democracy, human rights, and peace, particularly focusing on the decline of democratic values and institutions in Europe. It will address the broader implications of the current democratic crisis, emphasizing how the erosion of democratic norms and values can lead to systemic violations of human rights and international conflicts.

This lecture will delve into several critical issues concerning the current state of democracy in Europe and its broader implications. It will examine the underlying causes of the democratic crisis in the region and explore the consequences for human rights in the context of declining democratic institutions. The discussion will also address how populist leaders may exploit human rights rhetoric to consolidate power. Additionally, the lecture will analyse the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on democracy in Europe and globally, considering how these dynamics influence democratic values and institutions.

## Cluster 1 | Human Rights in Russia: Lecture 7 / 26 September | New Heights of Repressions

### Human Rights and Russian Society (Sociological Explorations)

Speaker: **Dr. Dmitry Dubrovsky**

Dr. Dmitry Dubrovskiy is a research fellow at the Department of Social Sciences and lecturer at the Boris Nemtsov MA in Russian Studies at the Department of Philosophy, Charles University.

Dr. Dubrovskiy was an associate professor at the Higher School of Economics (Moscow). In early April 2022, he was declared a “foreign agent” in Russia and left the country. Dr. Dubrovskiy is currently working at Charles University in Prague, with his research interest focusing on academic rights and freedoms, freedom of speech and minority rights.



The political turbulence of the late 1980s to early 1990s is referred to by scholars as the Russian Revolution of 1986-1993. This reflected on the importance and perception of human rights by the Russian society. Longitudinal research by S. Mendelson (2002, 2005, 2007) and T. Gerber (2002, 2017) demonstrates the attitudes of Russian people towards human rights in the late 1990s and from 2000 to 2015. The most impressive and essential survey was devoted to the Chechen war, with responses showing similarities to the current attitude toward the war. At the same time, the hierarchy of rights seen in this research could explain the political development of Russia during Putin's era. This lecture will provide a retrospective exploration of Russian society to the modern days and elaborate on how the civil society organizations had to grasp with infringing on human rights after February 2022.

## Cluster 2 | Human Rights from the European Lecture 8 / 30 September | perspective: a beacon of hope?

### Human Rights Aspects of International Migration Flows to Europe

Speaker: **Dr. Ciara Smyth**

Dr. Ciara Smyth is programme director of the LL.M in International Migration and Refugee Law and Policy at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, and lecturer in the School of Law, University of Galway, where she teaches Public International Law and International Protection of Human Rights.



EU migration and asylum law and policy have long been criticised for failing to live up to the standards of fundamental rights protection that the EU has set for itself. Whether the new Pact on Asylum and Migration is a step forward in this regard is heavily debated. This session will explore the debate with reference to key innovations in the new EU Pact, such as screening, restrictions on freedom of movement and detention, the normalisation of extraordinary procedures, and responsibility sharing between Member States.

## Cluster 1 | Human Rights in Russia: Lecture 9 / 3 October | New Heights of Repressions

### Russia's Other War: The Fight over Freedom of Expression

Speaker: **Dr. Ilya Yablokov**

Prof Dr. Ilya Yablokov is author of *Fortress Russia: Conspiracy theories in the post-Soviet world*. He is a multidisciplinary scholar working on disinformation, conspiracy theories and media development in the post-socialist states. Between 2015 and 2021 he was a lecturer in Russian culture and society at the University of Leeds (UK). He is currently working at the University of Sheffield as a lecturer in digital journalism and disinformation.



Propaganda had been around us forever but the social media technologies as well as the globalised world significantly changed the way how authoritarian leaders execute their powers to limit citizens' access to free information and spin the narratives in their favour. Dictators of the 21st century have learnt that the control of populations can be done smoothly without applying lots of sticks but providing more carrots to make people believe in the false values and pure lies. As a result, more states are manifesting the signs of illiberalism and the turn to authoritarianism.

In this lecture we shall explore how propaganda of the 21st century is different from the 20th century, explore the factors that justify curtailing citizens' rights and will look at the iconic example of the dictator of the 21st century.

## Cluster 2 | Human Rights from the European Lecture 10 / 8 October | perspective: a beacon of hope?

### Climate Change and Human Rights

Speaker: **Dr. Hendrik Schoukens**

Dr. Hendrik Schoukens is a professor at the Faculty of Law and Criminology, Department of European, Public and International Law at Ghent University. Prior to academic career, he was working as an environmental lawyer at LDR Advocaten, where he focuses on biodiversity-related cases. In 2011, he co-authored the first edition of the handbook of Biodiversity Law within the Flemish Region. His areas of expertise include international environmental law, European environmental law, biodiversity law, Flemish environmental and planning law.



As climate change increasingly impacts societies worldwide, its implications for human rights have become a critical area of legal and policy concern. Human rights obligations require the international community to take more ambitious action to mitigate emissions, to support adaptation that benefits persons, groups and peoples in vulnerable situations. The EU in this regard is an interesting case to observe with its developing case law which is shaping the EU obligations in regards to its own citizens as well as its external relations in trade negotiations. The session aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how EU institutions and legal frameworks address the human rights challenges posed by climate change.

# ONLINE SCHOOL ON HUMAN RIGHTS 2024

3 September - 10 October

10 October

Closing  
ceremony  
and  
presentation  
of group  
projects



## Organisers of Online School on Human Rights 2024

**Ghent University's Eureast Platform** engages in academic collaboration with and study of the countries of Eastern Europe and Eurasia. By fostering research and educational exchanges, the Eureast Platform contributes to the knowledge of its target countries, facilitating a deeper comprehension of their cultures, histories, and contemporary issues.

### Coordinators



**Anna Sashchenko** is currently working at Ghent University's International Relations Office, where she leads the Eureast Platform. In this role, she serves as the central point of contact for all matters related to Ghent University's academic cooperation with partners in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, encompassing both education and research. Additionally, Anna coordinates two networks: EUniverCities and the 3i University Networks.



**Iana Ovsianikova** is the coordinator of the Online School on Human Rights by an invitation of the Ghent University Eureast platform. She has a background in European Union International Relations studies and currently works in development cooperation consultancy, implementing EU-funded development projects on human rights, civil society and transitional justice in Central Asia and Africa.

### Academic Advisors



**Prof. Dr. Fabienne Bossuyt** is an Associate Professor and co-coordinator of the Ghent Institute for International and European Studies (GIES). She holds a PhD from Aston University (UK) and Ghent University based on a doctoral dissertation on the EU's influence in Post-Soviet Central Asia. She is a senior lecturer in the MA programmes in EU Studies and the MA Programme in Global Studies. In addition, she is co-director of the Eureast Platform of Ghent University.



**Prof. Dr. Ben Dhooge** is Associate Professor of Russian literature at Ghent University's Faculty of Arts and Philosophy. His research focuses on early twentieth-century (modernist) Russian literature, both Soviet and émigré. Currently, he is the co-director of Ghent University's Eureast Platform, together with Prof. Dr. Fabienne Bossuyt. Additionally, he leads the Eureast Platform's knowledge centre CERISE (Centre for Russian, International Socio-Political and Economic Studies).

## Organisers of Online School on Human Rights 2024

**The Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law at the University of Galway** is one of the world's premier academic human rights institutions, dedicated to the study of human rights, peace and conflict, international criminal law and humanitarian law, international refugee and migration law, gender and human rights and climate justice. The Centre has developed a global reputation for excellence in the field of human rights teaching, research and advocacy.

### Academic Advisor



**Dr. Roisin Mulgrew** is a Lecturer Above the Bar in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Galway. She is Director of Research at the School of Law, lead for the Crime, Punishment and Rights Research Cluster and member of the Irish Centre for Human Rights. Her publications include *Towards the Development of the International Penal System* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), *Research Handbook on the International Penal System* (Elgar, 2016) and forthcoming *Early Release in International Criminal Law* (Elgar, 2024).

At the core of **the Elena Bonner School of Human Rights** are former employees of the Sakharov Centre, the leading Russian NGO that promoted human rights and democratic values before it was dissolved on a ruling by the Moscow City Court in August 2023.

The **'EU Public Diplomacy – Russia'** (EUPDR) project is funded by the European Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments and aims to facilitate meaningful engagement between EU stakeholders and the Russian pro-democratic community in exile. By fostering connections and moments of dialogue, EUPDR seeks to build a better understanding of the EU among Russians and to strengthen the cooperation between EU and Russian peers.



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