

Internationale Konferenz vom 20.11.-22.11.2008 in Nürnberg

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Vortrag: Zur Geschichte der europäischen Menschenrechtspolitik

Abstract

At the beginning of the 20th century there was optimism, coming from the period of Enlightenment, that the spread of humane and scientific outlook would lead to the fading away, not only of wars, but also of other forms of cruelty and barbarism. In the light of these expectations, the century of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and Saddam Hussein was a surprise. Based on the shocks of the brutality and atrocities committed by the Nazi regime in the 1930s and beginning of the 40s, the world agreed to say loud and clearly “never again” by adopting the universal declaration of human rights in 1948. The wording of the text was familiar from the constitutions of a number of democracies. The revolution in 1948 was that human rights were moved from being a sovereign issue for the nation state to become a legitimate international concern. It became legitimate for the new international community to address issues which until then had been exclusively for governments to protect. Namely how are people under the jurisdiction of the nation state being treated? Human rights conventions were adopted as yardsticks for minimum decent behavior. It was however not until the end of the Cold War that a serious focus was established on how to take the human rights norms from the law books into the realities of local communities. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 is a milestone in relation to this new human rights agenda. The speech will focus on the implications of this new approach, which has made human rights more controversial in Europe.

Zur Person:

Direktor der Agentur der Europäischen Union für Grundrechte; 1991-2008 leitender Direktor des Dänischen Instituts für Menschenrechte; 2002-08 Mitglied des UNO Ausschuss gegen Rassendiskriminierung (CERD); 2004 Wahl zum Nachfolgekoordinator; 2004-07 Präsident des Internationalen Koordinierungsausschuss Nationaler Menschenrechtsorganisationen (ICC);
Arbeitsgebiete: Kapazitätenbildungsprojekte mit Regierungen und Nationalen Institutionen im Bereich der Menschenrechte; zahlreiche Veröffentlichungen zu menschenrechtsbezogenen Themen, insbesondere zur Flüchtlingsgesetzgebung, zum Verbot rassistischer Diskriminierung und zur Rolle Nationaler Menschenrechtsorganisationen.

Ausgewählte Publikationen:

- "National Human Rights Institutions: A Partner in Implementation", in 'The First 365 days of the United Nations Human Rights Council', UN Human Rights Council, 2007
- "The UN reform process in an implementation perspective", in 'Human Rights in Turmoil', Martinus Nijhof Publishers 2007
- "Human Rights for Immigrants and Immigrants for Human Rights", in 'International Migration and Security, Opportunities and Challenges'. Ed. Elsbeth Guild and Joanne van Selm. Routledge, 2005
- "Reservations to Human Rights Treaties and the Vienna Convention Regime", in 'Conflict, Harmony or Reconciliation' in The Raoul Wallenberg Institute Human Rights Library. Ed. Ineta Ziemele. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2004
- "National Human Rights Institutions – implementing human rights", in 'Human Rights and Criminal Justice for the Downtrodden', Martinus Nijhof Publishers 2003