

DOSSIER

THE AGE OF THE RIGHTS: GREAT OPPORTUNITY AND A GREAT CHALLENGE

The **CONSOLIDER- INGENIO** program has included for the first time an investigation related to human rights. The **HURI AGE** project developed by a group of researchers in the legal field, is one of the twelve projects granted by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation for the 2008 call.

CONSOLIDER INGENIO 2010 program is the main way of financing of the ministry for excellent projects. It's a five year length strategic action focused on consolidating groups leading Spanish science and technology that intends internationalization and the reach of excellence in investigation.

In this way, The **HURI AGE** project leaded “**Bartolomé de la Casas**” Institute on Human Rights of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, is coordinated by professor **Gregorio Peces Barba** and gathers 12 research groups with a wide experience and well known career on the study and training of the human rights.

21st Century: The age of rights?

From the end of the XXth century, it seems to exist a political and social general **positive view in favour of human rights**, supposedly engaged to its realisation. Rights have managed to consolidate themselves as a main reference on the discussions about legitimacy of national and international political and legal systems, and to be declared as essentials for the construction of fair coexistence models.

Unfortunately, **theory and praxis of human rights are not together**. Just taking a look at the reality we realize that the **effective fulfillment of human rights in the whole world is far away from being achieved**. The rethoric and incoherent use of human rights made in many times, betrays their historic function – the achievement of human emancipation- and so, the **civil society distrusts on them**.

A qualified investigation worried about the reality of human rights and paying attention on the social demands in this area can contribute to overcome this situation. This is the main goal of HURI AGE.

What's HURI AGE?

the Consolider-Ingenio 2010 **HURI AGE** program is an integral and new project focused on making wider the frontier of knowledge in the investigation of human rights, to optimize the

quality and impact of the results and to guarantee their effective transmission to the academic training area as well as the political , business and social fields.

Which are the HURIMAGE proposals?

HURIMAGE proposal is to analyze from a comprehensive approach, the role played by human rights in contemporary societies, identifying goals and challenges and suggesting solutions focused on the consolidation and widening of the rule of law.

HURIMAGE intends to **solve the gap existing in human rights between theory and praxis**. This is its most ambitious and innovative feature. From the theoretical study HURIMAGE intends to **create measures focused on the implementation of public policies**, the design of institutions and the intervention of operators related to human rights; To suggest **answers to the great challenges** of the XXI century on human rights; To set **channels of socialization and education on human rights** targeted to make society aware of their value.

In this way, it will be possible an **important improvement on the knowledge of the reality of human rights**. HURIMAGE will make able as well, **to use this improvement to transform reality and to contribute to the full acknowledgement and the effective implementation of rights in the national and international context**.

Who is taking part in the HURIMAGE project?

HURIMAGE team is composed of **twelve research groups** of different Spanish Universities with more than **80 researchers**.

The groups involved in the HURIMAGE project are:

- Instituto de Derechos Humanos “Bartolomé de las Casas”, de la Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.
- Grupo de investigación Informática, Lógica y Derecho de la Universidad de Sevilla.
- Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universitat de València.
- Grupo del Laboratorio de Sociología jurídica de la Universidad de Zaragoza.
- Grupo del Área de Filosofía del Derecho de la Universidad de Cantabria.
- Instituto de Derechos Humanos “Pedro Arrupe” de la Universidad de Deusto.
- Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya.
- Cátedra de Democracia y Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Alcalá.
- Grupo de investigación La comparación en Derecho Constitucional: tendencias contemporáneas de la Universidad de Cádiz
- Grupo de investigación en Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Jaume I de Castellón.
- Grupo de investigación Democracia y derechos de la Universidad de Jaén.
- Grupo de investigación Valores, Derechos y Estado en los inicios del siglo XXI de la Universidad de Vigo.

With the support of whom?

Dealing with current challenges that human rights are facing to, establishing an action program in this area, **demands an efficient and constant communication with the agents involved in the fight for implementing human rights.**

To guarantee this interaction **HURI AGE intends to involve public institutions, associations, public and private institutions in the development of the investigation.** They will be known as “**spokesman groups**” and they will be asked to **give a critical and external point of view** (as agents of civil society) to the project. That’s why **they will be informed about the activities the project is carrying out**, and about the results of researching and will participate as well in different activities such as seminars, proposals and guides.

HURI AGE relays also on groups and researchers from universities abroad in order to guarantee the quality of the results of the project and its internationalization. They will be informed of activities and improvements of the project at the time that are integrated in some activities and goals.

Which are the main lines of HURI AGE?

The project approaches **12 lines matched up with the main interests of national and European political agenda and with civil society concerns about human rights.**

These twelve lines are:

Rights in the ethical, political and legal context
International organization and justice
Democracy, Governance and participation
Implementation and effectiveness of human rights
Multiculturalism
Science and technology
Humanitarian action
Emerging rights
Economic, social and cultural rights
Development and environment
Vulnerable groups
Liberty and Security

How does HURIAGE work?

Project is structured in different **Platforms-** Investigation, Training, Reinforcing and Dissemination-Popularizing- Transfer-, **projected over the 12 lines of research already put forward.** These platforms are integrated at the same time by several activities.

Developing thematic lines that integrates the research program that appears as the main contemporary challenges to the rights is the main function of **research platform**. Some **actions** are integrated in the platform such as **carrying out research studies or strengthening research structures**.

Transfer results from the HURI AGE to the teaching area -postgraduate and training of professionals linked to human rights- is the function of the **training platform**.

Reinforce platform intends to operate transversally touching on the actions which integrate the rest of the platforms and **reinforcing the groups quality, competitiveness, internationalization, visibility and impact**.

Finally the **diffusion, dissemination and transfer platform** will create a **web site** and will develop a **Latin American portal on human rights**, as well as **guides, reports and newsletters** about HURI AGE. The main function will be to assure the suitable transmission of the activities and results obtained as well as to promote their transfer to the axis institution-enterprise-society. Such actions not only constitute an independent goal in the project but are effective **instruments in the modification of the social and political reality**.

Why now?

Consolider Ingenio 2010 program is a **unique occasion** to increase the quality of legal research on human rights, **to turn their groups into reference points in a national and international level**, to **improve the knowledge of one of the nuclear problems affecting contemporary societies** and to make profitable the results of this development.

And this is a good moment. HURI AGE is being carried out at the same time that **other projects on human rights are being developed**, such as **The European Human rights Agency or the Spanish National Plan on Human Rights**.

Moreover, the program **is taking place** in a current **positive atmosphere about the concern** of non- profit organizations and other institutions **for the satisfaction of human rights** and corporate social responsibility, what generates a strong demand of training on this field.

Gathering efforts

Contemporary societies face to new challenges: management of globalization, climate change, the combination of liberty and security, the fight against poverty and discrimination, and so on. All these challenges demand a rigorous and **serious research** in order to understand the role and scope of human rights.

It is essential to gather efforts. Public institutions, people linked to the fight for human rights, as well as public and private companies, have lot of things to say and many ways of contributing. **That's why researchers, spokesman groups, and international support groups may work**

together in the development of the Consolider research activity in order to manage the 21st Century is known as the age of the Rights. **It's a great challenge and** above all, **a great opportunity.**

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