

## THE AGE OF RIGHTS

*M Isabel Garrido Gómez, Universidad de Alcalá, introduces a major new human rights project involving 12 Spanish universities and 80 researchers.*

The Consolider-Ingenio programme of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation provides major funding for research in Spain. For the first time, in the 2008 call, it has granted funding for the investigation of human rights under the auspices of the HURI-AGE project. The project has been developed by a group of researchers in law. It will run for five years and will be led by the Bartolomé de la Casas Institute for Human Rights at the University Carlos III of Madrid. The project coordinator is Professor Gregorio Peces-Barba who will oversee 12 research groups composed of academics with a wealth of experience in the study of human rights.

### What is HURI-AGE?

HURI-AGE is an integrated project which aims to expand the frontier of knowledge in the investigation of human rights, optimise the quality and impact of research results and guarantee their effective transmission to the academic training community as well as to the political, business and social fields.

### What are its aims?

HURI-AGE will conduct a comprehensive analysis of 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. The project intends to solve the gap that exists in human rights between theory and praxis. This is its most ambitious and innovative feature. From theoretical study, HURI-AGE intends to create measures focused on the implementation of public policies, the design of institutions and the intervention of operators related to human rights. It will suggest answers to the great challenges to human rights in the 21st century and suggest methods of socialisation and education to make society aware of their value.

In this way it will be possible greatly to improve knowledge of the reality of human rights. HURI-AGE plans to use this improvement to transform reality and contribute to the full acknowledgement and the effective implementation of rights in a national and international context.

### Who is taking part in the project?

The HURI-AGE team is composed of more than 80 researchers at 12 different Spanish universities: the University Carlos III of Madrid, the University of Alcalá; the University of Seville; the University of Valencia; the University of Saragossa; the University of Cantabria; the University of Deusto; the Institute for Human Rights of Catalonia; the University of Cadiz; the University Jaume I of Castellón; the University of Jaén; and the University of Vigo.

### Who is supporting the project?

Dealing with current human rights challenges and establishing a programme of action demands efficient communication with the agents involved in implementing human rights. To guarantee this interaction HURI-AGE intends to involve both public and private sector organisations in the research. They will be known as 'spokesman groups' and will be asked to give a critical and external point of view (as agents of civil society) to the project. They will be kept informed about activities and research and will participate in events and publications, such as seminars, proposals and guides. HURI-AGE is also hoping to liaise with groups and researchers from universities abroad in order to guarantee the quality of the results of the project and its internationalisation. They will be regularly updated on progress.

### What are the main strands of the project?

The project has identified 12 areas for research which match up with the main interests of national and European political agendas and with civil society concerns about human rights. These research areas are: rights in the ethical, political and legal context; international organisation 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 will the project work?

The project is structured around four platforms: research; training; reinforcing; and diffusion, dissemination and transfer. These platforms will cover the 12 areas of research described above and will be integrated by several activities. The research platform will develop integrated themes relating to the main contemporary challenges to rights and will carry out research studies and work to strengthen research structures. The training platform will work to transfer results from HURI-AGE into education – postgraduate and the training of professionals linked to human rights. The reinforcing platform intends to operate transversally touching on the actions which integrate the other platforms reinforcing the quality, competitiveness, internationalisation, visibility and impact of the 12 research groups. Finally, the diffusion, dissemination and transfer platform will create a website and will develop a Latin-American portal on human rights, as well as guides, reports and newsletters about HURI-AGE. Its main function will be to communicate information about the project's activities and research results as well as to promote their transfer from research institutions to the wider enterprise society. Such actions not only constitute an independent goal of the project but are effective instruments in the modification of the social and political reality.

For more details, email [eprensa@tiempodelosderechos.es](mailto:eprensa@tiempodelosderechos.es) or visit the HURI-AGE website (in Spanish) [www.tiempodelosderechos.es](http://www.tiempodelosderechos.es).

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#### Articles

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#### Book reviews

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*Between Authority and Interpretation: On the theory of law and practical reason* by Tom Campbell – Joseph Raz

*'A Great And Noble Occupation!': The history of the Society of Legal Scholars* by William Twining – Fiona Cownie and Raymond Cocks