



## WORLD FORUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS

**22 – 25 May 2013 / Nantes - France**

### PRESS RELEASE

The 5<sup>th</sup> World Forum on Human Rights, held at La Cité Nantes Events Center from 22 to 25 May 2013, gathered 2,000 participants including 200 speakers from all parts of the world (more than one hundred countries). Attendance proved lower than the initial number of registrations (5,400). However, the participants and speakers of the 5th edition were all pleased to attend and expressed great satisfaction with the Forum which focused on concrete action, close to the people, and on the joint development of public policies. The Forum also pointed at the action of local governments, without placing all hopes on the States and inter-State negotiations. Today, local governments are organized in international networks such as UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments). The theme chosen for this edition – *Sustainable Development / Human Rights: a common struggle?* – clearly showed how solidarity and collective work among all the local stakeholders could help to implement Human Rights, successfully and efficiently.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Forum of Human Rights took place in the global context of an economic and social crisis which affected the organisation of the event. Thankfully, the continuous support of the local governments - in particular Nantes Métropole, the Pays de la Loire Region and the Loire Atlantique County Council – has made it possible to stage this 5<sup>th</sup> edition in the best conditions possible.

Through their support, the local authorities deserve much credit for the success of the Forum. They could have easily shown indifference to this type of event and to the foundation of the Nantes Forum. And that is: information on the reality of Human Rights, including in their own region, an open and free dialogue among all the various stakeholders and, finally, the search for concrete solutions in order to achieve progress in the implementation of Human Rights. One example is the unique alliance that the Nantes Forum attempts to encourage among all the stakeholders with the support, whenever possible, of the local authorities.

Nevertheless, despite the current difficulties in relation to the challenging economic context, the Nantes Forum was probably one of the most rewarding editions in terms of quality. The [plenary session](#) held on Friday 24 May on the issue: *What territories for tomorrow? Towards public policies based on Human Rights...* was very rich with testimonials and informative analysis. One of the speakers was the Mayor of Athens, Mr Yiorgos Kaminis, who explained his battle against the racist and xenophobic violence perpetrated by the far-right movement against immigrants. He was himself assaulted for refusing to let racial discrimination dominate in Athens, the cradle of Western civilization.

It is impossible to name all those who took part in the Nantes Forum: the **200 speakers** and also the many delegates who, for the most part, fight daily against tyranny and misery and who work in favour of equality and dignity for all human beings, wherever they live.

**Beyond these extraordinary encounters, the World Forum on Human Rights was the occasion to reiterate that there would be no sustainable development without respect for Human Rights,** including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It also highlighted the fact that the positive transformation of the world will be made possible through the joint action undertaken by the various stakeholders on the ground, local governments, activists, NGO leaders, committed academics and responsible business leaders with the help of international organizations.

[Professor Emmanuel Decaux](#), President of the Forum organising body (SPIDH in Nantes – Pays de la Loire), concluded the Forum by referring to the challenges and the tools available to local authorities, notably [the Global Charter Agenda of Human Rights in the City](#), produced by the UCLG commission *Social Inclusion, Participative Democracy and Human Rights (SIPDHR)* and adopted by the organisation in 2011.

Based on this guidance document for the effective implementation of human rights standards on the ground, the various stakeholders are encouraged to share about their respective experiences, the best practices leading to the fulfillment of the rights and the joint development of local public policies. This is what the World Forum on Human Rights achieved, proving its usefulness and relevance. Now, the work must continue, using all available means - in particular online digital resources – and developing partnerships between all the stakeholders. This way, the Nantes Forum, either physical or virtual, will be able to strengthen action in favour of Human Rights in the territories, at municipal, regional and national levels.

**More info + [SPIDH website](#)**



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