**Input from the City of Utrecht**

March 2022

1. **Laws, policies and programmes that have been developed by local authorities explicitly to promote and protect human rights, including those related to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations.**

**Overall**

Utrecht wishes to be a city for *everyone* and has a long tradition of trendsetting, social policies. In the last decade, this tradition has further developed under the integral inspiration of [Healthy Urban Living for Everyone](https://healthyurbanliving.utrecht.nl/). Due to this integral vision we work on creating an Utrecht for everyone, in all aspects of our citizen’s lives. We seek to protect and support our citizens in order to truly become themselves, regardless of education, where you come from, sexual-and gender identity, your religion and limitations/physical or mental conditions. We wish to continue our strive on becoming a city for everyone. Here we elaborate on themes where we believe Utrecht has a special contribution to make to the inclusion of our societies.

**Human Rights City**

We have embedded various social policy areas in an explicit *human rights approach*. Since 2010, Utrecht has contributed to the [EU Framework for Human Rights Cities](https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/human-rights-cities-framework) that was launched October 2021 in Vienna. This framework is partly based on the practice developed in Utrecht as a human rights city, but also on the ambition to make the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights much more widely known and serve as inspiration for local policy development. Our ambition in the upcoming years is to seal human rights in our social policies, whereas human rights are the cornerstones of safeguarding an equal and a fair city for everyone.

* The City of Utrecht appointed co-mayor Linda Voortman specifically responsible for *Inclusion, Diversity and Human Rights;* supported bya dedicated team of around 20 policy-advisors who work specifically on topics such as asylum, human rights and inclusion.
* The City of Utrecht actively aiming to become more inclusive and diverse with regard to e.g. staff and manners of inclusive marketing / use of language.
* Utrecht actively implements the [EU Human Rights Cities in the EU Framework](https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/human-rights-cities-framework) as the first [Human Rights City of The Netherlands](https://www.duic.nl/algemeen/utrecht-eerste-nederlandse-mensenrechtenstad/).
* Sustainable monitoring structures are in place e.g.: <https://www.utrecht-monitor.nl/sociale-leefomgeving> and <https://www.volksgezondheidsmonitor.nl/discriminatie-utrecht/page203.html>. Also using the SDG lens: [Global Goals - Doelstellingen Global Goals - Utrecht (incijfers.nl)](https://utrecht.incijfers.nl/dashboard/global-goals/doelstellingen-global-goals/).

**Welcoming City for refugees - Plan Einstein**

[Plan Einstein](https://plan-einstein.nl/en) is an locally, national and international unique and trendsetting concept which creates meaningful encounters and mutual understanding among residents of the Utrecht asylum seeker centre, local residents and other ‘Utrechters’. We organise common education voluntary activities, meetings, joint collaboration and sharing knowledge, Plan Einstein works on the truthful inclusion of ‘minorities’ and ’majorities’.

With EU grant from Urban Innovative Action we started to work, in a poor neighbourhood of the city, with many stakeholders like the (peoples and official) universities, Welcome in Utrecht, Refugee council, Build your own future, cultural organizations like the Wild west, the front room, Common Ground Garden, protestant and catholic churches, sports organizations (Sportbuddies, U-Board) and refugees and local citizens to offer a broad pallet of services and activities for everyone in the city. Plan Einstein facilitates the inclusive developing of skills, expanding your social network, free open spaces for meaningful encounters of local citizens and refugees and is evidence based. The Plan Einstein concept is inspiration in our open welcoming policy for all Utrecht citizens and all kinds of hubs in the city. We already started with neighbourhoods. gardening and cultural plan Einstein hubs across the city and will expand these kind of hubs.

**The Utrechtse Anti-Discrimination Agenda**

Utrecht firmly stands up against any form of discrimination. As from 2016, we developed in close collaboration with partners, organizations and citizens the [Utrechtse Anti-Discriminatie Agenda](https://www.utrecht.nl/zorg-en-onderwijs/samenleven-welzijn/utrecht-voor-iedereen/utrecht-tegen-discriminatie/): a comprehensive and integral approach on how the municipality of Utrecht proceeds against any kind of discrimination in a broad range of fields. In 2021 we published the most recent Utrecht Anti-Discrimination Agenda. Our core-message and thus ambition is clear: discrimination is unacceptable.

The Anti-Discrimination Agenda was developed during an extensive participation progress with partners and citizens within Utrecht during November/December 2019 until april 2021. We continue to stay in close contact with them during the execution of the agenda via de PACT (an agreement) we made with dozens of organisations and partners active in a broad range of domains. The anti-discrimination office [Art. 1 Midden Nederland](https://art1middennederland.nl/discriminatie-melden) is the gate-way for reporting any form of discrimination.

**A place for everyone - Together we are Utrecht**

The action plan [T*ogether we are Utrecht*](https://www.utrecht.nl/zorg-en-onderwijs/samenleven-welzijn/utrecht-voor-iedereen/utrecht-zijn-we-samen/)focusses on diminishing polarisation and radicalization in Utrecht and invests in creating an open, social and welcoming Utrecht for everyone.

The action plan ‘Together we are Utrecht’ has been developed during an extensive participation process with Utrecht citizens. Close collaboration on ‘ground level’ in the different neighbourhoods of Utrecht are until this day maintained after the implementation of the action plan: neighbourhood-networks, representation-organisations, police, and municipality created an intense network for communication and monitoring. A broad range of trainings, support, youth support, special education programmes are designed to reach, protect and help Utrecht citizens who are in the spot of polarisation and radicalisation. A regular overview on the actual situation with regard to polarization and radicalisation is periodic presented to the City Council.

**The specific initiatives benefit the wider population as following:**

**Welcoming refugees and Plan Einstein**

* Plan Einstein tries to be inclusive in all their activities. Young people living as good neighbours next to asylum seekers. Learning together on ICT, entrepreneurship (build your own future, English) refugees and local citizens Voluntary activities for everyone and also organized by refugees with Welcome in Utrecht organisation.
* With the Plan Einstein concept in different hubs in the city we make all kind of services, neighbourhood building more attractive and open for everyone in the city. An example is also the front room with more inclusive development art and crafts for refugees in cooperation with local citizens
* Also the Plan Einstein entrepreneur/build your own business/women in business program gives opportunities to start your own business in cooperation of a refugee and local citizens.

**The Anti-discrimination Agenda**

* The anti-discrimination agenda focus on a broad range of domains such as housing market, labour market, education, public space, sport and freedom of religion. These domains touch the lives of every citizen in Utrecht, not just the few or specific target groups only.
* A diverse range of (local) partners agreed on collaboration *pacts* per domain.

**Together we are Utrecht**

* The action plan is not only targeted on the specific individuals who might be drawn into a radicalised position with polarisation actions, it also has an impact on the wider circle and organisations around such individuals. Thus, the programme seeks to have a wider impact within our city**.**

**In addition, as a municipality we continue to take concrete steps in the field of human rights and inclusion as well. Recent examples are:**

* The [LHBTI+ Rainbow Agenda](https://www.duic.nl/algemeen/gemeente-presenteert-voortgang-regenboogagenda-positieve-maar-ook-negatieve-ontwikkelingen/) and signing [the Dutch Intersex declaration](https://ris2.ibabs.eu/Reports/ViewListEntry/Utrecht/9a68cca9-56b3-4467-a8be-ecedaddbdff6)
* [Vision Digital City](https://www.utrecht.nl/bestuur-en-organisatie/utrecht-gezonde-stad-van-en-voor-iedereen/digitale-stad/) and [signing the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights](https://ibestuur.nl/nieuws/de-stad-utrecht-sluit-zich-aan-bij-de-cities-coalition-for-digital-rights)
* The Human Resources [Action Plan on Diversity and Inclusion](https://ris2.ibabs.eu/Reports/ViewListEntry/Utrecht/b7bb28f3-4aa9-4952-99bd-d8110e2c6491)
* [The Toegankelijkheidsprijs](https://www.utrecht.nl/zorg-en-onderwijs/samenleven-welzijn/utrecht-voor-iedereen/toegankelijk/toegankelijkheidsprijs/) for Utrechters with limitations.
* [Research about the slavery history of Utrecht](https://www.duic.nl/algemeen/gemeente-presenteert-voortgang-regenboogagenda-positieve-maar-ook-negatieve-ontwikkelingen/)

**As Utrecht, we aim to ensure the quality of diversity and inclusion initiatives due to:**

* We have been subsidizing over the last couple of years Art. 1 Midden Nederland in their formal role as anti-discrimination bureau.
* We have developed a broad range of measures and policies to ensure the quality of our diversity and inclusion initiatives, specifically targeted on minority-groups which have to deal with discrimination.
* We are in the moment re-thinking our overarching inclusion and diversity policy (mainstreaming), which will also include specific measures for such as LHBTIQ+, BIPOC, individuals with limitations, woman/street intimidation, individuals vulnerable for radicalisation.
* We are one of the frontrunner cities implementing the EU Framework for Human Rights Cities.
* The city council is regularly informed about the progress on topics such as [Together we are Utrecht](https://ris2.ibabs.eu/Reports/ViewListEntry/Utrecht/e4e489b9-3d42-41f5-99ff-231448e46783), [human rights](https://ris2.ibabs.eu/Reports/ViewListEntry/Utrecht/0e8d358b-48a0-4d9d-bf11-ddb43224b8ff) and LHBTIQ+ [Regenboogagenda](https://ris2.ibabs.eu/Reports/ViewListEntry/Utrecht/c28cfe27-70ae-4476-ae63-1a1087413d63).

**Sustainability and civic society engagement**

In Utrecht we have a longstanding cooperation with our (social) partners and the innovative networks in which we bring them together. We involve them in the steps we undertake during – for example- new policy making and its implementation. These local stakeholders are our crucial eyes and ears in order to understand what we – as a city – have to do in order to fight discrimination and enhance diversity and inclusion.

In Utrecht a wide range of civil society initiatives, CSO’s, NGO’s, social entrepreneurs, et cetera have an active contribution to our local culture of inclusion and diversity culture. At the website of the [Human Rights Coalition Utrecht](https://humanrightsutrecht.nl/aangesloten-organisaties/) you find around 100 organisations closely related to all kind of inclusion work, that work together under the umbrella of the Utrecht Human Rights Coalition. To spotlight some of them:

* LHBTIQ+: [COC Midden Nederland](https://www.cocmiddennederland.nl/), [Colored Qollective](https://www.coloredqollective.org/), [PANN](https://pann.nl/), [Midzomergracht Festival](https://midzomergracht.nl/), [Jonge Utrechtenaers](https://www.jongeutrechtenaers.nl/), U-pride (city of Utrecht internal staff network organization)
* Discrimination Complaint Options: [Art. 1 Midden Nederland](https://art1middennederland.nl/), [National Institute for Human Rights](https://mensenrechten.nl/)
* BIPOC: [Keti Koti Utrecht](https://sporenvanslavernijutrecht.nl/beeld/projecten/keti-koti-tafels/), [Tori Oso](https://torioso.nl/), [030%](https://nl.linkedin.com/company/030procent), [Stichting Asha](https://www.stichtingasha.nl/), [NiNsee](https://www.ninsee.nl/)
* Disability: [SOLGU](https://www.solgu.nl/)
* Refugees: Vluchtelingenwerk, SNDVU, STIL, Seguro.
1. **Challenges faced by local authorities and promising practices, to promote and protect human rights, including in relation to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations.**

See above.

1. **Key principles that should guide local and national governments in the promotion and protection of human rights.**

National governments should be challenged (by international institutions) to support their local governments and communities to promote Human Rights in an explicit way. And supporting them with knowledge and funding. Cities work already implicitly on many Human Rights challenges: we should go beyond this stage and work into the direction of a professional Human rights City / Community Label based on an internationally recognised mechanism for the local level. And answering the question: How to become a human right city and what to do? Self declaration is not good enough. Therefor we also need the international support for the creation of a peer2peer assessment and evaluation system for the local level as key part of the Mechanism and the Label.