



Marktplatz 7, A - 4310 Mauthausen

Mob. 0043 0660 229 29 06, e-mail: andrea.wahl@bewusstseinsregion.at,
www.bewusstseinsregion.at

Information Sheet

First international Symposium for Human Rights at Bewusstseinsregion Mauthausen - Gusen - St. Georgen

Dear Ms! Dear Sir!

as opposed to seemingly end- and aimless discourse on migration and immigration, we are finally taking initiative! I am proud to present the results of this initiative in the following sheet.

Our idea was born far from the political squabble - it derived from the commitment of regular citizens. Initially without any financial backing, we were now granted support by the European Union in order to professionally kick-off our project. In addition, potential commercial sponsors have shown interest in joining our efforts.

Curious?

Then do not hesitate to read on!

First up, though, I would like to invite you to our preliminary press conference on 19 September 2017. With its unique and highly interesting agenda, the conference will provide you with the highlights of the Human Rights Symposium prior to its start.

You will find a detailed invitation alongside the program in this sheet. Additionally, this sheet provides you with information for potential reports on the Region of Awareness. Feel free to make use of the data and images available in the press area of www.bewusstseinsregion.at.

With this letter, I do not only hope for you to spread the word about our initiative in all of Europe, but I would also like to hand over some responsibility in our effort of preserving human rights.

Yours sincerely,
Andrea Wahl MBA

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Invitation to a Press Forum on Tuesday, 19 September 2017

Start: 10 a.m. at Marktgemeindeamt Mauthausen, Marktplatz 7, 43010 Mauthausen

A Press Conference for the first international Symposium for Human Rights organized by the Region of Awareness („Bewusstseinsregion“).

The date purposely coincides with the Dialogforum Mauthausen taking place on September 18 and 19 under the motto “artistic reflections on national socialism.” Attendees are invited to combine the press conference with this event, please notify under 0043 01 53126-3708, e-mail: info@mauthausen-memorial.org

- 10.00 a.m. Get-Together
Opening speech by Mayor Thomas Punkenhofer, Marktgemeindeamt Mauthausen, Marktplatz 7, 4310 Mauthausen
- 10:45 a.m. Visit to Mauthausen memorial, “Arts and time of nationalsozialism”, Talk with representants of the Mauthausen memorial.
- 12.30 a.m. Lunch at Mauthausen memorial.
- 1:00 p.m. Audiotour Gusen „Das unsichtbare Lager“ („The invisible camp“), 10 years of Audiotour Gusen
- 3.00 p.m. Presentation by the Region of Awareness Mauthausen, Gusen, St. Georgen with mayors Thomas Punkenhofer, Christian Aufreiter, Erich Wahl MBA, and the executive of the Region of Awareness Andrea Wahl MBA
Aktivrooms 4222 St.Georgen/Gusen
- The first international Symposium for Human Rights: Presentation of goals, participants, activities, and supporters
- 4.00 p.m. „Passage of Oblivion, Steps of Remembrance“: active commemoration in St. Georgen/Gusen
- 5.30 p.m. Casual get-together at a memorable location. Dinner at “Mostschenke Frellerhof” near Mauthausen memorial with representatives of the local commemoration initiatives (Gedenkinitiativen Plattform Johann Gruber, Gedenkdienstkomitee Gusen, Mauthausen Perspektive)

Andrea Wahl, executive of the Region of Awareness and Erwin Kringinger, head of the working group for communications, will be with you during this eventful day.

We hope to welcome you at this press forum and are looking forward to giving you preliminary information on the Symposium for Human Rights and our efforts at preserving democracy and human dignity.

Consequently you are also invited to join the Symposium and attend workshops, conferences, lectures, and cultural events surrounding the subject of human rights.

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Region of Awareness Mauthausen – Gusen – St. Georgen

A lasting, regional human rights centre

“Region of Awareness” (Bewusstseinsregion) – that is the name of the project which, with the support of the Leader-Region Perg Strudengau and its citizens, aims at realizing ideas, visions, and efforts connected to the work for human rights. Since the beginning of May 2017, a lot of activities have already taken place – and there are many more to come until December 2018!

For this purpose, the three communities of Mauthausen, Langenstein (Gusen), and St. Georgen have joined forces. Mayors Thomas Punkenhofer (Mauthausen), Christian Aufreiter (Langenstein) and Erich Wahl MBA (St. Georgen) are already working on providing the infrastructure we need for our great projects.

Accordingly, Mauthausen will take over most administrative tasks, Gusen will be the meeting point for culture- and youth events and St. George is to become the center of education on the subject at hand.

Our great yet realistic vision is to become an internationally renowned event- and educational center for ethics and human rights. Three locations which for a long time have been working on coming to terms with their past have now set the course towards the future. We no longer want memorials to be gruesome tourist attractions: We want them to stand as monuments for building a more peaceful future!

This years’ first activities already set the tone: With the aim of imparting ethical values to the world, the Region of Awareness was influential in organizing the celebrations of Victory in Europe Day this past May.

First international Symposium for Human Rights

As a still young organization, being the host for the first international Symposium for Human Rights from 9 to the 12 November 2017 is a great effort. Nevertheless, we are excited to invite you to this unique gathering.

Our logo showcases the colors of the peace movement as well as the dove of peace. The message is clear: We stand for peace, diversity, tolerance and global humanity.



The project is run by Andrea Wahl MBA, the executive of the Region of Awareness. She is supported by a volunteer working group focusing on communications and PR. The advertising agency *Online* serves as a professional consultant in marketing.

“Ever since their initiation, human rights have never been in a deeper crisis”

Dr. Manfred Novak, Professor for International Human Rights

The first international Symposium for Human Rights aims at raising awareness of how human rights have first been established and which basic themes they incorporate. On the basis of recent developments, it will be shown where in the world human rights are endangered and where we need to be vigilant in order to prevent them from being undermined. In memorial of the Program Night of the 9 November 1938, it will be shown that, given the wrong social climate, human rights can quickly be dismissed.

The program for the Human Rights Symposium was compiled by a group of activists surrounding the Region of Awareness with the support of SOS Menschenrechte Upper Austria as well as the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights at the University of Vienna.

The symposium provides insights into the subject of human rights to a wide audience. Visitors are invited to reflect on its history, its connection to present affairs, and ideas and visions for the future.

During our *tours* on Friday, 10 November, and Sunday, 12 November, we will present the historical significance of Mauthausen, Langenstein, and St. Georgen and provide an understanding of the various kinds of tasks in working with memorials.

Visitors and international guests of the symposium can expect a highly interesting program. Participants from Italy, Poland, Spain and Germany have already shown interest in being part of this event.

Mauthausen: historical tour through the village; Mauthausen memorial
Langenstein: visit to the ruins of Spielberg; audio tour Gusen
St. Georgen/Gusen: a modern community introduces itself; “PASSAGE gegen das VERGESSEN” (Passage against Oblivion)

The tours will be led by representatives of the local memorial organizations such as Christoph Freudenthaler, Bernhard Mühleder, Franz Pötscher, Martin Hanl, Erich Wahl, and Christoph Mayer, the artist who designed Gusen’s audio tour.

Lectures will be held by experts in the field of human rights such as Prof. Novak and the European Commissioner Josef Weidenholzer. Additionally, blogger, net-activist and journalist Kübra Gümüşay (Hamburg) has agreed to join us.

Saturday, 11 November, is *Workshop Day* featuring many interesting subjects:

„Human Rights 101“ (Menschenrechte – ein Aufriss)

What exactly do human rights regulate and how are they put into practice? Anna Müller-Funk of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights will lead this essential workshop.

Endangerment of Human Rights / Gray Areas / Which groups are endangered?
SOS Menschenrechte pinpoints current problematic developments in human rights.

Undermining our basic rights / Public Surveillance

Hans Gerhard Zeger, president of ARGE Daten, an organization dedicated to protecting privacy in the digital age, gives an overview on the legal issues of surveillance and potential problems in the field.

Hate Speech

Hateful and discriminating language is an increasingly threatening issue on social media. SOS Menschenrechte and Kübra Gümüşay discuss underlying causes and methods on how to counteract hate speech online.

My History – Our History

The project PIONEERS by the Friedensbüro Salzburg shows that recent conflicts such as the Yugoslav War are far from forgotten. Young people are working on coming to terms with their and their families' histories.

Fascism and Antiziganism

Nuna Stojka, daughter-in-law of Roma concentration camp survivor Ceija Stojka, shows how human rights were suspended in Nazi Germany.

Positive Examples of Democracy

At an info-market and World Café various projects will be presented: Projects for memorial work and peace from Austria, Italy and Spain, projects for inclusion and integration such as the Bistro at Mauthausen's memorial, networks in supporting refugees in the area, and the project "Soma Social Market".

Human Rights – Developing a statement for the region

What is crucial for our region? Where do we want to go in the future? Dr. Alfred Zauner from the Institute of Conflict Research will join the process.

Childrens' Rights

Our young participants will be able to learn about childrens' rights during day care.

The *Cultural Program* draws a line from the Program Night to a literary breakfast and a reading by Franz Forschauer titled „Meinen Hass bekommt ihr nicht.“ (“You do not get my hatred”).

Furthermore, the program provides a poetry slam (including a workshop) by the organization Post Skriptum as well as Catalan music and street theatres surrounding the topic of human rights.

Regional schools are invited to join the workshops by SOS Menschenrechte. Eleven classes out of five schools have already registered.

The Donausaal Mauthausen as well as facilities of the Neue Mittelschule Mauthausen will serve as venues for lectures. The preliminary tours and workshops will take place in the three participating communities. Renowned guests from the fields of academics, culture and politics have already evinced interest.

Center for Human Rights – Internationality is Key

We are glad to cooperate with and build upon the expertise of organizations from various European countries. Our partner cities in Italy along with partners in Spain, Germany, and Poland allow us to get in touch with a diverse group of people and organizations. Over borders and generations we stand against anti-democratic developments and for peaceful coexistence. We believe that putting a special focus on youth and schools will help us steer our way to sustainable peace in Europe.

Our cooperation with the International Committee of Mauthausen provides us with the opportunity to work alongside many nations towards a common goal: Peace and the mantra of “not ever again!”

Contact:

Andrea Wahl, MBA;

✉ andrea.wahl@bewusstseinsregion.at;

☎ 0043 660 229 29 06

August 2017, compiled by Andrea Wahl, MBA

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