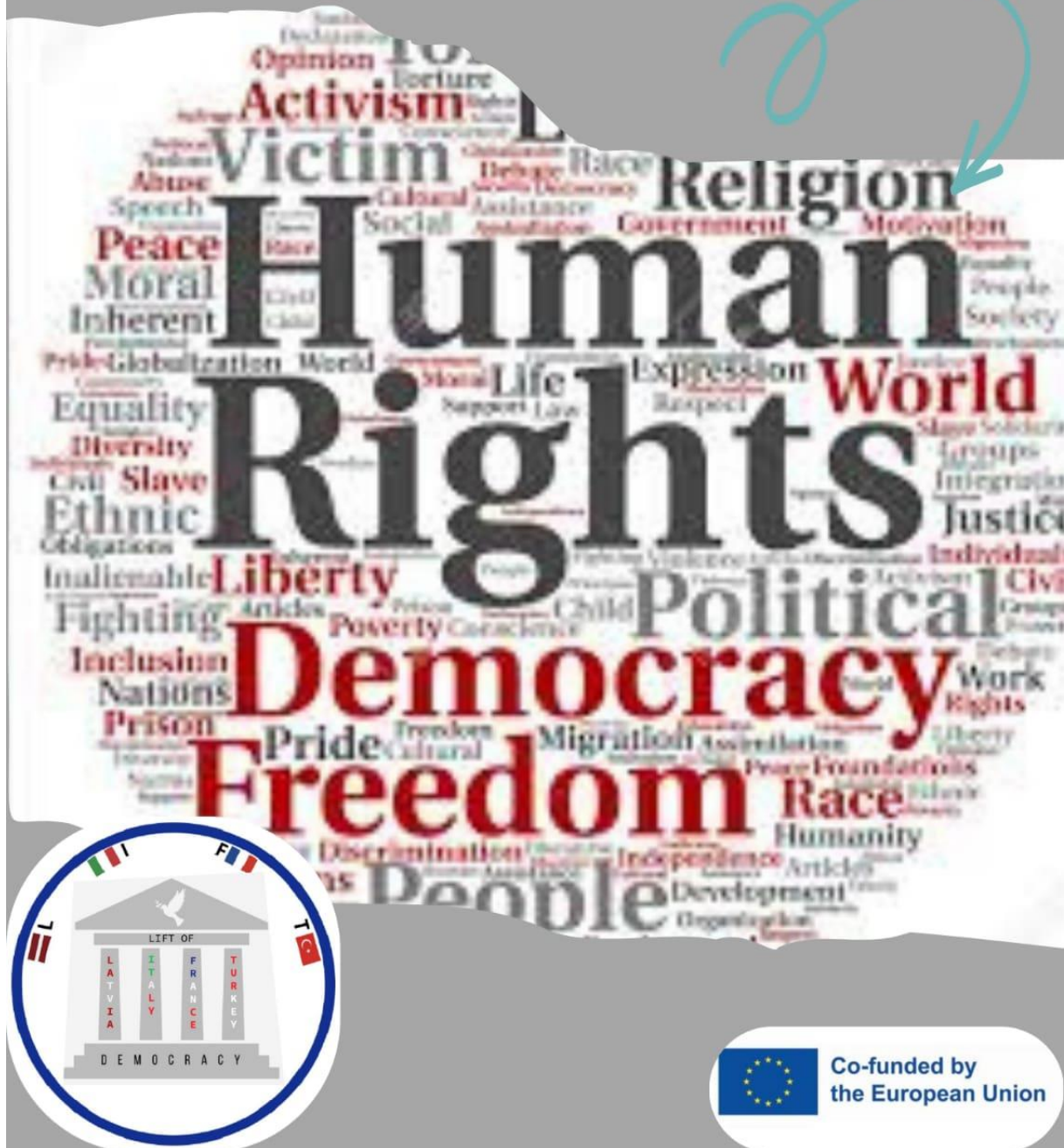# LIFT OF DEMOCRACY
PROJECT E-MAGAZINE

History of Democracy

The ancient Greeks were the first to create a democracy. In the year 507 B.C., the Athenian leader Cleisthenes introduced a system of political reforms that he called demokratia. The word "democracy" comes from two Greek words that mean people (demos) and rule (kratos). Democracy is a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives. But was democracy always the same?

Athenian democracy was severely weakened after **the *Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC)*.** Defeat to Sparta in the war shook Athens' political and economic power. During this period, democracy briefly ended, and an oligarch called the "***Thirty Tyrants***" was established. Although democracy was restored, Athens never regained its former political power. Athenian democracy effectively ended with the conquest *of Athens by King Philip II of Macedon in 338 BC.*

After the decline of Athenian democracy, Sparta had a great influence on the political tradition of Europe, starting from **Ancient Rome** and continuing until the eighteenth century. **Democracy in Rome**, unlike representative democracy in the modern sense, was a system in which the people participated in government through representatives they elected, rather than directly. However, this democracy was a form of government with clear differences and limited participation between social classes, rather than a structure in which all citizens had equal rights.

The first democratic movements in Europe began to be seen in England towards the end of the Middle Ages. Another important event in the history of democracy is the **Magna Carta**. Together with the Magna Carta, the principle of the rule of law was laid down and it was declared that no ruler could be above the law.

The Enlightenment is most identified with its political accomplishments. This era is marked by three political revolutions, which together lay the basis for modern, republican, constitutional democracies: The English Revolution (1688), The American Revolution (1775-83), and The French Revolution (1789-99). The Enlightenment project of re-making the political world is in accord with the models we allegedly find in our reason. The political revolutions of the Enlightenment, especially the French and the American, were informed and guided to a significant extent by prior political philosophy in the period.
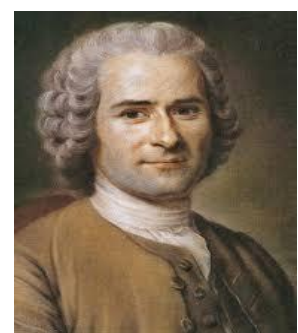

Philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke introduced the idea that no ruler should have unlimited power. Both argue that leaders derive their authority from the people of the country.

JOHN LOCKE

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

The Principles of Democracy
What do democratic principles mean?

Democratic principles are ideas that most people believe are essential for a democracy to thrive.

Let's take a look at these democratic principles:

1- Participation of Citizens

By its very definition, democracy allows the people a voice in charting the course of their government and their future.

Participation is not just voting on election day, although this is surely its most notable form. But equally important are public debate, town meetings, and peaceful protests, among other things.

2- Equality

All people should be treated equally and without discrimination and be given equal opportunities. This means that they are not discriminated against because of their ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

3- Transparency

Government must be open to the public about its actions. It must allow the public to give input before new laws are passed.

4- Accountability

Government must be accountable to the people for its actions, including the laws that are passed and how these laws are implemented. Our taxes are used for government spending and all budgets and financial statements should be presented to parliament and be available to the public.

5- Free and Fair Elections

Elections must happen in a free and fair way, without intimidation, corruption or threats to the public before or during the election.

6- Freedom of Economy :

As long as they follow the rules, it's not the government's place to tell them what they must study or what job they must take or what they must grow. Economic freedom is important in order to develop strong communities and strong national economies.

7- The Rule of Law

Laws are enforced equally, fairly and consistently and no one is above the law. This means that everyone , including government officials, must obey the law. It also means that governments cannot punish people unless they have broken the law.

8- Human Rights

All people living in a democracy should have guaranteed rights, such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion, the right to work and education and the right to organize and take part in peaceful protests.

Human Rights and Liberties

Human rights and liberties are fundamental principles that ensure dignity, freedom, and equality for all individuals. These rights are universal, meaning they apply to everyone regardless of nationality, gender, ethnicity, religion, or social status. They are protected by international laws and agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

One of the most important aspects of human rights is the right to life and personal freedom. This means that every person has the right to live without fear of violence, slavery, or torture. Another crucial right is freedom of expression, which allows individuals to share their opinions and ideas without censorship or repression. Similarly, the right to education ensures that everyone has access to learning opportunities, helping to build a more informed and just society.

Despite these protections, human rights violations still occur worldwide. Discrimination, poverty, and political oppression continue to threaten the rights of many people. In some countries, freedom of speech is restricted, and individuals are persecuted for their beliefs. In others, gender inequality limits opportunities for women and marginalized groups.

International organizations, such as the United Nations and Amnesty International, work to promote and protect human rights across the globe. Governments, NGOs, and individuals also play a crucial role in defending these rights by raising awareness, supporting victims, and advocating for stronger legal protections.

The collaboration between students from different countries, like in this Erasmus project, is an example of how people can come together to promote human rights and liberties. By sharing knowledge and experiences, we can contribute to a more just and equitable world for future generations.

International Protection of Human Rights

The protection of human rights at the international level is essential to ensuring justice, equality, and dignity for all individuals. Various international organizations, treaties, and courts work together to uphold fundamental rights and prevent violations worldwide.One of the most significant frameworks for human rights protection is the **United Nations (UN)**. Established in 1945, the UN promotes human rights through the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, adopted in 1948. This document sets out fundamental freedoms such as the right to life, freedom of expression, and protection from torture. The UN also has specialized agencies, like the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** and the **Human Rights Council**, which monitor violations and promote international cooperation.Another crucial institution is the **European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)**, which enforces the **European Convention on Human Rights**. It allows individuals to bring cases against their governments if they believe their rights have been violated. Similarly, the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights** and the **African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights** work to uphold human rights in their respective regions.

Apart from courts and organizations, international treaties play a key role in human rights protection. Agreements such as the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** and the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** legally bind countries to protect specific rights. Additionally, organizations like **Amnesty International** and **Human Rights Watch** advocate for victims and raise awareness about global human rights issues.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Some governments fail to respect international human rights laws, and conflicts, poverty, and discrimination continue to threaten people's freedoms. However, international cooperation, legal mechanisms, and activism help strengthen the global commitment to human rights protection. Through education and awareness, individuals and nations can work together to create a fairer and more just world.

International Human Rights Charities

Human rights are fundamental principles that protect individuals from injustice, discrimination, and oppression. Around the world, various international charities work tirelessly to promote and defend these rights, ensuring that people have access to justice, education, healthcare, and freedom. These organizations play a crucial role in addressing human rights violations, providing humanitarian aid, and advocating for policy changes. This paper will explore some of the key international human rights charities, their missions, and their impact on global society.

One of the most well-known organizations is **Amnesty International**. Founded in 1961, this non-governmental organization (NGO) focuses on defending human rights through campaigns, research, and advocacy. Amnesty International investigates cases of injustice, political imprisonment, and torture, pressuring governments to uphold human rights laws. The organization also raises awareness about issues such as freedom of speech, refugees' rights, and the abolition of the death penalty. With millions of supporters worldwide, Amnesty International has successfully influenced many governments to change policies and release prisoners of conscience.

Another significant human rights charity is **Human Rights Watch** (HRW). Established in 1978, HRW conducts thorough investigations into human rights violations and publishes detailed reports to expose abuse and injustice. Their reports often focus on war crimes, gender-based violence, and government oppression. By documenting these violations, HRW puts pressure on international institutions and national

governments to take action. The organization also works closely with the United Nations and other global institutions to ensure that human rights are upheld.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) is another influential organization. Founded in 1922, FIDH works to protect civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. It operates in over 100 countries, providing legal support, advocating for policy reforms, and mobilizing grassroots organizations to strengthen democratic values. FIDH plays a crucial role in holding governments accountable for human rights abuses through legal mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court.
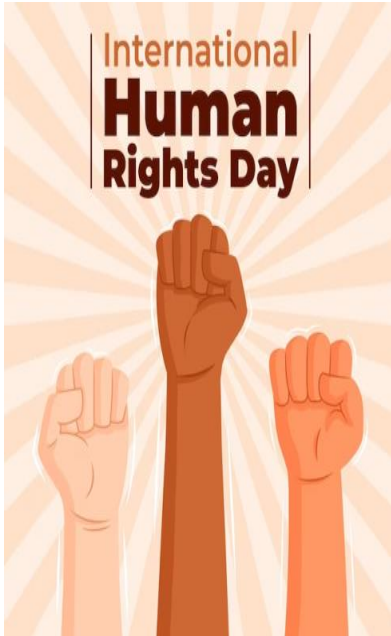
The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, though primarily known for humanitarian aid, also plays a vital role in human rights protection. The organization assists victims of armed conflicts, natural disasters, and other humanitarian crises. It ensures that international humanitarian laws are respected and provides crucial support to displaced populations, offering food, shelter, and medical care. The Red Cross is often one of the first organizations to respond in crisis situations, working to protect the dignity and rights of those affected.

    International human rights charities face numerous challenges, including political resistance, funding shortages, and security risks. Many organizations operate in dangerous environments where activists and journalists are often targeted. Despite these difficulties, they continue their work with dedication, relying on public support, donations, and international cooperation to carry out their missions.

Human Right Day

Human Rights Day, celebrated on December 10, is an important occasion to recall the country's commitment to fundamental freedoms and universal rights. This day marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, a text largely influenced by the Declarationof the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789, a pillar of history. Many nations take advantage of this day to reaffirm their commitment to human rights on the international scene, through the United

Nations and the European Union. However, challenges and criticisms persist in various countries regarding issues such as the treatment of refugees or concerns about law enforcement practices such as police violence. In short, this day is a strong moment to defend and promote human rights, both nationally and internationally.

Introduction to The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe (CoE) stands as a beacon of unity and human rights in a continent once torn by conflict. Founded on May 5, 1949, in the aftermath of World War II, it emerged from a visionary idea: to prevent future atrocities by fostering cooperation among European nations. Ten founding members, including France, the United Kingdom, and Belgium, signed the Treaty of London, establishing the CoE in Strasbourg, France—a symbolic location bridging Western Europe.

Unlike the European Union, the CoE isn't about economic integration but rather safeguarding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Today, it unites 46 member states, stretching from Iceland to Turkey, representing over 700 million people. Its mission crystallized with the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, a groundbreaking treaty that gave citizens the power to hold governments accountable through the European Court of Human Rights.

The CoE's work touches everyday lives—whether through banning the death penalty across its members, protecting free speech, or promoting cultural diversity. Its key institutions, like the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, bring together delegates to debate and shape policies that ripple across borders.

European Convention on Human Rights

The **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** is an international treaty that protects human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. It was drafted by the **Council of Europe** and signed in **Rome on November 4, 1950**. The Convention entered into force on **September 3, 1953**.

Purpose and Importance   The ECHR was created in response to the horrors of World War II, aiming to protect individuals from government abuses and ensure democratic values across Europe. It serves as a legal framework for human rights protection among member states of the **Council of Europe**.

Key Rights Protected by the ECHR

The Convention guarantees several fundamental rights, including:

1. **Right to life (Article 2)** – Protects individuals from unlawful killings.
2. **Prohibition of torture (Article 3)** – Bans inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
3. **Right to liberty and security (Article 5)** – Ensures protection against arbitrary arrest and detention.
4. **Right to a fair trial (Article 6)** – Guarantees impartial judicial proceedings.
5. **Respect for private and family life (Article 8)** – Protects individuals from government interference in personal matters.
6. **Freedom of expression (Article 10)** – Grants the right to express opinions freely.
7. **Freedom of assembly and association (Article 11)** – Ensures the right to form and join groups, including trade unions.
8. **Prohibition of discrimination (Article 14)** – Prevents discrimination based on race, gender, religion, or other factors.

Enforcement and the European Court of Human Rights:

The **European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)**, based in **Strasbourg, France**, is responsible for enforcing the ECHR. Individuals and groups can file complaints if they believe their rights have been violated by a member state. The Court's decisions are legally binding, and countries must comply with its rulings.

Impact of the Convention

- It has helped protect millions of people from human rights violations in Europe.
- It has influenced national laws and policies to align with human rights standards.
- It has set a global example for human rights protection.

United Nations Charter

The **United Nations Charter** is the founding document of the **United Nations (UN)**. It was signed on **June 26, 1945**, in **San Francisco, USA**, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization. The Charter came into force on **October 24, 1945**, marking the official establishment of the UN.

Key Principles of the UN Charter:

1. **Maintaining International Peace and Security** – The UN works to prevent conflicts and mediate disputes among nations.
2. **Promoting Human Rights** – The Charter upholds fundamental human rights and freedoms for all people.
3. **Respect for Sovereignty** – The UN respects the sovereignty and equality of all its member states.
4. **Encouraging Social and Economic Development** – The UN supports economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social progress.
5. **International Cooperation** – The UN fosters global collaboration to address global issues such as poverty, health crises, and climate change.

Main Organs of the UN as Defined in the Charter:

The Charter establishes six principal organs that operate under its framework:

1. **The General Assembly** – A forum for all member states to discuss global issues and make recommendations.
2. **The Security Council** – Responsible for maintaining international peace and security, with five permanent members (USA, UK, China, Russia, France) and ten rotating members.
3. **The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** – Works on global economic, social, and environmental policies.
4. **The International Court of Justice (ICJ)** – Settles legal disputes between states.
5. **The Secretariat** – Carries out the day-to-day operations of the UN, led by the Secretary-General.
6. **The Trusteeship Council** (inactive since 1994) – Originally helped non-self-governing territories achieve independence.
7. **Impact of the UN Charter:**

United Nations Charter 1945

LawGlobal Hub

- The Charter established the UN as an organization committed to preventing future world wars.

- It laid the foundation for international diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and conflict resolution.