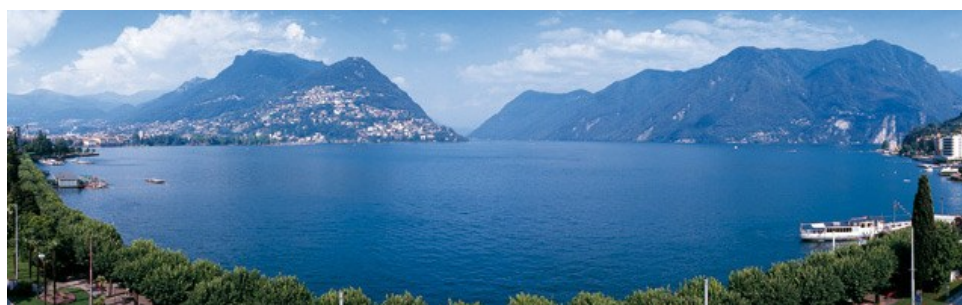


LUGANO XI

Human Rights across UNESCO's Mandate: From Normative Foundations to Country-level Action



26 – 28 August 2026
Lugano/Switzerland

Hotel Bellevue au Lac
Riva A. Caccia 10, 6902 Lugano/Switzerland
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Conference room « La Panoramica »

Working language: English

Building on the Geneva Human Rights Dialogues initiative launched by the Swiss Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with international partners, **this edition will focus on four human rights areas that are central to UNESCO's mandate**: the right to education, cultural rights, the right to science, freedom of expression, as well as rights in the digital space.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to **explore how UNESCO National Commissions can contribute to advancing human rights** within UNESCO's fields of competence, including through the implementation of UNESCO's normative instruments and relevant synergies at the national level.

As objective, throughout the meeting, participants will jointly:

- identify common challenges and opportunities for National Commissions to advance human rights within UNESCO's areas of competence
- exchange experiences and good practices
- explore existing resources and possible forms of cooperation and peer learning;
- reflect on possible follow-up activities after the Lugano Meeting

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 26 August 2026		
In the morning: Arrival of participants		
13:00 (from)	Lunch (optional)	Hotel Bellevue au Lac
Session 1 - Opening and introduction to the theme		
14:30	Opening - Welcome address and presentation of the meeting objectives	Nicolas Mathieu, SG Swiss Commission for UNESCO
14:35	Participants are invited to briefly introduce themselves (approximately 3 minutes each), highlighting their main areas of interest <u>relevant to the theme of the meeting</u>	Moderation: Nicolas Mathieu, SG Swiss Commission for UNESCO
15:30	Introduction of the guiding questions for the meeting: 1) What are the main opportunities and challenges for National Commission to advance human rights within UNESCO's areas of competence? 2) What conditions and resources enable National Commissions to work effectively on human rights? 3) What practical opportunities exist for cooperation and peer learning on human rights among National Commissions and with key partners, including National Human Rights Institutions, international human rights mechanisms, NGOs, academia, OHCHR and UNESCO? Sharing experiences and good practices in advancing human rights	Moderation: Peter Larsen, member Swiss Commission for UNESCO Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC Selected National Commissions will present concrete examples of initiatives, challenges and lessons learned. TBC
16:15	End of session 1	
16:15	Coffee break	
Session 2 – Resources, guidance, tools, processes around human rights within UNESCO mandate (Education) ¹		
16:45	Overview of existing UNESCO resources, guidance and tools in the Education Sector, as well as relevant human rights mechanisms and processes Interactive discussion drawing on the experiences of National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat, with a view to reflecting on the relevance, added value, usability, applicability, potential impact, outreach, adaptability to different national contexts and	Moderation: TBC Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC (10' UNESCO + 5' OHCHR + 30' discussion)

¹ See Annex I for a non-exhaustive selection of key UNESCO and OHCHR reference documents related to this session.

	reporting implications of the resources presented.	
17:30	End of session 2	
19:00	Informal Evening Programme Departure by funicular (or on foot) to Monte San Salvatore , followed by dinner. Leaving from the hotel lobby at 18:30 sharp	
Thursday 27 August 2026		
From 07:30: Breakfast at the hotel		
Session 3 – Resources, guidance, tools, processes around human rights within UNESCO mandate (Culture) ¹		
09:00	Key takeaways from sessions 1 & 2	Session Rapporteurs (key takeaways): TBC
09:10	Overview of existing UNESCO resources, guidance and tools in the Culture Sector , as well as relevant human rights mechanisms and processes Interactive discussion drawing on the experiences of National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat, with a view to reflecting on the relevance, added value, usability, applicability, potential impact, outreach, adaptability to different national contexts and reporting implications of the resources presented.	Moderation: TBC Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC (10' UNESCO + 5' OHCHR + 30' discussion)
09:55	End of session 3	
Session 4 – Resources, guidance, tools, processes around human rights within UNESCO mandate (Sciences) ¹		
10:00	Overview of existing UNESCO resources, guidance and tools in the Sciences Sector , as well as relevant human rights mechanisms processes Interactive discussion drawing on the experiences of National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat, with a view to reflecting on the relevance, added value, usability, applicability, potential impact, outreach, adaptability to different national contexts and reporting implications of the resources presented.	Moderation: TBC Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC (10' UNESCO + 5' OHCHR + 30' discussion)
10:45	Coffee break	
Session 5 – Resources, guidance, tools, processes around human rights within UNESCO mandate (Communication & Information, Digital sphere) ¹		
11:15	Overview of existing UNESCO resources, guidance and tools in the Communication and Information Sector, and the Digital Sphere , as well as relevant human rights mechanisms processes Interactive discussion drawing on the experiences of National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat, with a view to reflecting	Moderation: TBC Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC 2 rounds (10' UNESCO + 5' OHCHR + 30' discussion)

	on the relevance, added value, usability, applicability, potential impact, outreach, adaptability to different national contexts and reporting implications of the resources presented.	
12:45	End of session 5	
13:00	Lunch	Hotel Bellevue au Lac
Session 6 - Taking stock: Opportunities and conditions for National Commissions to engage for human rights at national level		
14:00	Key takeaways from session 3, 4 and 5	Session Rapporteurs (key takeaways): TBC
14:15	Identification of points of convergence, recurring challenges and specific differences (e.g. related to thematic areas, national context, product design, ...) emerging from previous discussions, in light of the guiding questions: 1) What are the main opportunities and challenges for National Commissions to advance human rights within UNESCO's areas of competence? 2) What conditions and resources enable National Commission to work effectively on human rights? 3) What practical opportunities exist for cooperation and peer learning on human rights among National Commissions and with key partners, including National Human Rights Institutions, international human rights mechanisms, NGOs, academia, OHCHR and UNESCO?	Moderation: Peter Larsen, member Swiss Commission for UNESCO Short presentation by Mona M'Bikay, UPR Info Group discussions among National Commissions (World Café format), followed, after the coffee break, by a report-back from each group by a designated representative
15:00	Coffee break	
15:30	Report-back from each group by the designated representative	
16:00	End of session 6	
Session 7 – Networking / Community of practice's building for impact		
16:00	Feedback and reflections from UNESCO, OHCHR and other participating partners on the key points emerging from the National Commissions' discussions. Mapping out opportunities and ideas for National Commission action, stakeholder involvement, coordination with similar initiatives. Presentation of preliminary ideas for an integrated common process and discussion on its possible purpose and added value for National Commissions	Moderation: Peter Larsen, member Swiss Commission for UNESCO Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC
17:30	End of session 7	
19:08	Informal Evening Programme	

	Departure by boat to Gandria, followed by dinner. Leaving from the hotel lobby at 18:45 sharp	
Friday 28 August 2026		
From 07:30: Breakfast at the hotel		
Session 8 – Way forward for action and collaboration		
09:00	Key takeaways from Session 7, followed by a brief collective recap of the main points emerging from the meeting	Session Rapporteur (key takeaways): TBC Overall recap facilitated by: Peter Larsen
09:15	Reflecting on possible follow-up activities and future avenues for cooperation among interested National Commissions.	Moderation: TBC
10:30	Coffee break	
11:00	Open discussion: Any Other Business?	Moderation: Nicolas Mathieu, SG Swiss Commission for UNESCO
12:00	Closing remarks	
12:15	Lunch (optional)	Hotel Bellevue au Lac
Afternoon / Evening / Following day: departure of the participants		

Contact during the meeting: Annalisa Beltrami, +41 (0)79 621 06 89, annalisa.beltrami@eda.admin.ch

About the Lugano Meetings: Fostering Cooperation between National Commissions in an Informal Setting

Since 2005, the Swiss Commission for UNESCO has organised the Lugano Meetings as an informal forum designed to foster cooperation between UNESCO National Commissions. Initially conceived to enable newly appointed Secretaries-General from the Europe and North America region to get to know one another and establish professional networks, the meetings have progressively expanded to include colleagues from other regions of the world.

While each edition has focused on a different thematic issue within UNESCO's mandate, the overall purpose has remained unchanged: to provide a trusted space for peer exchange, mutual learning and open discussion among National Commissions. Participants are encouraged to share experiences, reflect on common challenges and explore opportunities for future cooperation. No formal decisions are taken during the Lugano Meetings. The meeting report provides a summary of the key takeaways that National Commissions may wish to pursue further in their own national context and/or together.

Themes of Previous Lugano Meetings

Lugano II (2007): National Commissions and World Heritage.

Lugano III (2008): Working together to address common challenges.

Lugano IV (2010): The International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

Lugano V (2011): Links between World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Lugano VI (2013): Cooperation with UNESCO Chairs and other networks.

Lugano VII (2015): Assessing UNESCO's values at the national level.

Lugano VIII (2016): Global Citizenship Education (Target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda).

Lugano IX (2018): The notion of "at risk" across UNESCO's areas of competence, more specifically in connection with the Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information sectors.

Lugano X (2022): Strengthening the contribution of the Sciences within UNESCO's mandate.

Annex I – Key UNESCO and OHCHR Reference Documents

The documents and resources listed below constitute a non-exhaustive selection of UNESCO and OHCHR reference materials relevant to the themes addressed during the XI Lugano Meeting. They are provided as a resource to support participants' preparation and to serve as reference material during and after the meeting. They are not intended as compulsory pre-meeting reading.

For each theme, the documents are organised into core references and further reading. The former present the main normative and policy framework, while the latter provide complementary guidance, tools and background resources. This distinction is intended solely as a practical guide for participants. Other relevant documents may also be referred to during the discussions.

1. Right to Education

UNESCO core references

- Right to Education - Progress Assessment Tool for Transformation (RtE-PATT) - [Click here](#)
- Guide to RtE-PATT Assessment Tool - [Click here](#)
- Guidelines to Strengthen the Right to Education in National Frameworks - [Click here](#)

Further reading

- RtE-PATT Briefing Document - [Click here](#)

2. Cultural Rights

► Artistic Freedom / Status of the Artist

UNESCO core references

- 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist - [Click here](#)
- Methodological Guide for the Participatory Development of Law on the Status of the Artist - [Click here](#)

Further reading

- Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity - [Click here](#)
- Quadrennial Periodic Reports under the 2005 Convention - [Click here](#)
- Culture and working conditions for artists - [Click here](#)

► Living Heritage (2003 Convention)

UNESCO core references

- Guidance Notes under the 2003 Convention - [Click here](#)
- Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage - [Click here](#)

► Tangible Heritage

UNESCO core references

- The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention - [Click here](#)

Further reading

- UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples - [Click here](#)

3. Right to Science

UNESCO core references

- Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers - [Click here](#)
- Assessment Tool on the Freedom and Safety of Scientists - [Click here](#)

4. Freedom of Expression

UNESCO core references

- Global Toolkit for Law Enforcement Agents: Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Safety of Journalists, UNESCO (2022) - [Click here](#)
- Covering Hate Speech: A Guide for Journalists (2024) - [Click here](#)
- Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms (2023) - [Click here](#)
- Protecting Critical Voices: Guidance on Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) on Digital Platforms (Draft currently in consultation, Version 3.2) - [Click here](#)

Further reading

- User Empowerment through Media and Information Literacy Responses to the Evolution of Generative Artificial Intelligence (2024) - [Click here](#)
- Operational Guidelines: Constructing UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Cities (2024) - [Click here](#)
- Social Media 4 Peace: Local Lessons for Global Practices (2023) - [Click here](#)
- Global Roadmap for Information as a Public Good in the Face of the Environmental Crisis: Key Takeaways and a Strategy to Implement the 2024 World Press Freedom Day Call for Action, UNESCO (2024) - [Click here](#)
- Press and Planet in Danger: Trends, Challenges and Recommendations (2024) - [Click here](#)
- Balancing Act: Countering Digital Disinformation While Respecting Freedom of Expression (2020) - [Click here](#)
- The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence Against Women Journalists (2021) - [Click here](#)

5. Human Rights in the Digital Sphere

*Please refer to the documents listed under **Freedom of Expression**, which also constitute the principal UNESCO reference documents for discussions on human rights in the digital sphere.*

6. Cross-cutting OHCHR Resources

OHCHR core references

- Global Human Rights Indicator Framework - [Click here](#)
- UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity - [Click here](#)

Further reading

- National Frameworks for the Safety of Journalists: A Global Perspective - [Click here](#)

- Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity / Report of the Secretary-General 2025 - [Click here](#)
- Human Rights Indicators Tables with SDG indicators - [Click here](#)
- Human Rights Education in Primary and Secondary School Systems: A Self-assessment Guide for Governments - [Click here](#)
- Bridging our Diversities: A Compendium of Good Practices on Human Rights Education - [Click here](#)
- Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice - [Click here](#)