



CHREN HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC

Project in collaboration with Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte e. V. (Boyenstraße 41, 10115 Berlin)

Call for Applications

Analysis of the practice of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) with regards to the right to housing

I Project description

Homelessness is one of the most extreme forms of social exclusion, which has a negative impact on people's physical and mental health, well-being and life expectancy. Homeless people are not only isolated, they are also threatened and affected by violence due to their vulnerability. Anyone who is homeless is restricted in their rights - not only the right to housing, but also the right to family life, to health or the right to participate in society. Situations in emergency shelters are also often precarious, which is particularly problematic for children, women who have experienced violence or people suffering from mental health conditions. The issue of homelessness has increased significantly in the EU over the last ten years. In 2024, at least 1,300,000 people in Europe were homeless, approximately 530,000 of them in Germany. In many German cities and in some rural areas, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find affordable housing.

The [Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte e.V. \(GFF\)](#) plans to conduct strategic legal proceedings in the context of the right to housing in order to improve the situation described. The main aim of the legal proceedings would be to strengthen the rights of vulnerable groups of individuals. These include in particular:

- Protection against loss of housing (protection against dismissal and eviction),
- Protection during homelessness (appropriate accommodation in emergency shelters) and
- Access to housing (provision and mediation of housing)

In the planned legal proceedings, the protection provided under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights might play an important role. The right to housing was not explicitly included in the German Basic Law. In some federal state constitutions, however, the right to housing is explicitly standardized, but is not understood as a subjectively enforceable right. In the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to housing is recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in Article 11.

In this context, the CHREN Human Rights Clinic examines the international legal background for potential proceedings by analyzing the decision-making practice of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), on the right to housing in further detail and by identifying the potential for its application to German strategic litigation. Of particular interest in this regard are the specific standards the UN

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the competent body for monitoring implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by its State parties, requires of member states in order to realize the right to housing.

A team of 4-6 students will conduct, among other things, an academic analysis of the decision-making practice of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). As a formal submission, the CHREN Human Rights Clinic will provide a legal opinion (written in English) to the GFF. The document submitted by the Clinic serves as preparatory work for a possible strategic litigation conducted by the GFF.

During the course of the project, selected students will develop the following skills:

- Legal writing in English
- Report Drafting
- Legal analysis
- Teamwork
- Presentation Skills

The submission will be published and the students will be credited as authors. Participants also gain an insight into the highly interesting work of our practice partner GFF and therefore a new perspective on possible opportunities for future careers in the field of constitutional law and human rights.

Estimated project time commitment from students:

- 5-6 hours per week (on average, research, writing and student team coordination)
- regular meetings with project supervisors in person or online

Upon completion of the project, students will receive a letter of recommendation from the project supervisors of the CHREN Human Rights Clinic, as well as from the Clinic Director. Participation in the project might also count towards internship hours depending on student's principal course of study at FAU, students from the Law School can be credited with 2 SWS as an optional course in "Schwerpunktbereich 11: Grund- und Menschenrechte", "Schwerpunktbereich 5: Internationales und Europäisches Öffentliches Recht" and/or as "Schlüsselqualifikation" (§ 2 I JAPO).

Timeline:

- April 2025: Selection of the student team
- Mai 2025: Kick-off meeting, getting acquainted with the CESCR and the right to housing, analysis of the legal material
- June/July 2025: Drafting of the written submission



II Desired student profile

We welcome students from Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, specifically those enrolled in the Law School, MA Human Rights, MA Development Economics and International Studies, the Economic and Management School, as well as Master's level students from other departments with at least a basic understanding of human rights, such as those in political science, philosophy, or geography programs.

We seek individuals with a strong dedication to human rights.

Proficiency in English, both written and spoken, is mandatory.

Proficiency in Spanish, Catalan and/or German is advantageous but not obligatory.

We expect one student to take on the role of “student project manager”. This person will be in charge of organizing communication among the student team and ensuring deadlines set by the project supervisors are met. We also expect a student to take responsibility for the consistent form of the written text and correct and consistent citation. Please indicate your willingness to fulfil one of these roles in your application.

III Application process

Interested students are kindly requested to provide the following documents:

- a. Curriculum vitae
- b. A concise letter of interest (maximum 500 words) detailing their relevant academic and/or professional background for the project, their current field of study, and instances of prior team-work experiences.
- c. Although not mandatory, including samples of written reports, papers, and/or PowerPoint presentations would strengthen your application.

It's important to note that the project leaders do not expect applicants to possess prior professional experience in the field. The aim of CHREN Human Rights Clinic is to offer participants an opportunity to gain valuable experience with human rights projects. Therefore, examples of academic work completed during your bachelor's and master's degrees are also acceptable.

Application materials should be sent to Daniela Kolland (daniela.kolland@fau.de) and Dr. Gemma Lligadas Gonzalez (gemma.lligadas@fau.de) **by 25 April 2025**.

Interviews will be held in person in the course of the week **from 28 April – 2 May 2025**.



About the CHREN Human Rights Clinic

The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* is an initiative launched by the Chair for Public Law, Public International Law and Human Rights (Professor Patricia Wiater) and the Center for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN) in the winter semester 2024. The CHREN Human Rights Clinic continues the work of the former *FAU Human Rights Clinic* that was founded in 2021 and led by Professor Anuscheh Farahat in cooperation with Professor Katrin Kinzelbach and Professor Patricia Wiater, as well as of the former *Human Rights & Business Clinic* that started working in 2022 and was led by doctoral researchers from the [International Doctoral Program Business & Human Rights](#).

The *CHREN Human Rights Clinic* has two primary objectives:

Firstly, the Clinic is an innovative teaching format that offers talented students the opportunity to develop their skills by working on real-life cases and projects relating to International Human Rights Law. Under the supervision of experts from human rights practice and human rights researchers at FAU, students will conduct interdisciplinary research to help partner organizations tackle cutting-edge human rights questions.

Secondly, the Clinic seeks to provide high-quality advice on complex human rights questions to NGOs, lawyers, international organizations and other partners from the field of human rights. To this end, practitioners can contact the clinic for advice on their advocacy work, research gaps and pro bono work. The Clinic does not act as the legal representative of a victim of human rights violations and does not initiate proceedings before courts or other human rights institutions. For more information, see [‘For Clients’](#).

Project supervision:

The Clinic Director is [Professor Patricia Wiater](#).

The Project will be supervised by two human rights researchers and doctoral candidates at FAU.