

Univerzitet u Sarajevu



University of Sarajevo



STUDY PROGRAM

EUROPEAN REGIONAL MASTER'S PROGRAM IN DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

**Professor Zdravko Grebo Center for
Interdisciplinary Studies**

STUDY PROGRAM:

European Regional Master's Program in Democracy and Human Rights
in Southeast Europe (ERMA)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human rights, including the right to education about human rights and democracy, are part of international standards and widely accepted legal norms. A large number of countries, including those in Southeast Europe, have committed to respecting them. In doing so, they have pledged to protect and promote the rights of all their citizens and residents. Educating people about their rights, based on international legal standards, ensures they become responsible citizens who think independently, care about their own and others' rights and needs, and strive to fulfill them through democratic means. As emphasized in the draft UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and in the Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, such training and education are crucial for promoting universal respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the principles of universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights.

Human rights education strengthens the right to peace and development, that is, the rights of individuals and nations to be protected from aggression, other unlawful uses of armed force, and mass impoverishment. Recent history shows that a lack of protection, together with conflict and severe human rights violations, along with a difficult transition to democratic societies, can destabilize an entire region with dire consequences and impacts across the European continent. Therefore, it is crucial to promote understanding, tolerance, and peace, as well as democracy and human rights, through active engagement in the field of education.

The advancement of democracy and the protection of human rights play a key role in achieving stability and lasting peace in the region. Strengthening human rights and democracy has been, and remains, a priority for Southeast Europe over the past two decades, especially today in the context of European integration. In this context, experts in this field—professionals, researchers, and academics—with foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies in human rights and democratization and regional expertise are of key importance. The European Regional Master's Programme in Democracy and Human Rights in Southeast Europe (ERMA) was launched in 2000 with the aim of educating such experts in an interdisciplinary and international setting, under the leadership of its two founding institutions—the University of Sarajevo and the University of Bologna—through the joint efforts of several universities from the region and Europe. Since 2000, the ERMA program has been funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy through the AICS agency (until 2021). Since 2022, the University of Sarajevo has co-financed the program's implementation. Since 2012, the program has been part of the Global Campus of Human Rights. The total financial support for this study program to date is slightly over 12 million euros.

To date, more than 660 students from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Southeast Europe, the European Union, and beyond have earned the Master's degree in Democracy and Human

Rights from this program. Since 2009, it has been conducted as a second-cycle Master's program within the Bologna Process, coordinated by the University of Sarajevo and the University of Bologna, awarding a double degree and 60 ECTS credits.

The program is intended for students who wish to combine academic studies with practical experience and research in the field of human rights and democratization. Human rights and democracy are subjects that cut across different academic disciplines—such as political science, social sciences, law, sociology, and philosophy—thus, ERMA encourages an interdisciplinary approach in all studied subjects.

Under the name Global Campus South East Europe, the program is today part of the Global Campus of Human Rights, a unique network of over 100 universities from around the world, aiming to advance human rights and democracy through regional and global cooperation in higher education.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's participation in this program is an important expression of its commitment to European integration and to belonging within the European academic space. Through it, new connections are established and strengthened both within the region and across Europe and globally—among lecturers, higher education institutions, and among students and alumni. Continuing this program and training future experts in human rights and democracy in Southeast Europe remains the primary goal of the program and is invaluable for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its higher education system, as well as for the Southeast European region.

The program is designed for students who wish to combine academic studies with practical experience and research in the field of human rights and democratization. It encourages the development and professionalization of young generations of civil servants, international and NGO workers, and researchers for universities and institutes in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo*, as well as countries of the EU, Azerbaijan, and beyond.

Accordingly, the program's admissions policy is defined as follows:

TARGET GROUP 1: 22 places are reserved for students from Southeast European countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo. They receive a full scholarship and pay only the enrollment fee.

TARGET GROUP 2: 3 places are reserved for students from EU countries and Azerbaijan. They receive a full scholarship but are required to pay both the enrollment fee and tuition.

TARGET GROUP 3: 3 places are reserved for students from other countries. They are not provided with a scholarship, and must pay both enrollment fee and tuition. Depending on the quality and number of applications, the program reserves the right to offer these places to students from EU countries as well.

The advancement of democracy and the protection of human rights continue to be a central priority for Southeast Europe, especially in the context of EU integration. In this context, experts in this field—professionals, researchers, and academics with regional expertise—are essential.

There is a high demand for highly educated experts in this field in the public sector, civil society, and international organizations, as evidenced by the fact that 86% of alumni from the last three ERMA cohorts (as of 2024) found employment within six months of graduation. The importance of the program and the need for its continued implementation is further confirmed by the total financial support of over 12 million euros to date.

Graduates of this Master's program are qualified to work in a variety of sectors, including:

- International organizations (UN, OSCE, EU, Council of Europe, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children, etc.)
- Government institutions (ministries, ombudspersons offices, judiciary)
- NGOs and think tanks (activism, advocacy, research)
- Academic and research sector (universities, institutes)
- Diplomacy and international relations (embassies, international forums)

In a broader sense, this program contributes to the development of higher education, in line with the strategic development goals of Sarajevo Canton.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1. Name of the program, type, level, goals, and the implementing institution

Name: European Regional Master's Program Democracy and Human Rights in Southeast Europe

Type and level: cyclical education, master's studies, second cycle (Level VII)

Study program objectives:

- Educating future professionals, researchers, and academics with advanced knowledge, skills, and competencies in the field of human rights and democracy, with a particular focus on regional expertise in the context of Southeast Europe,
- equipping students for practical work in international organizations, the non-governmental sector, academic institutions, and public administration through an interdisciplinary approach and professional practice,
- developing their ability for critical analysis of social phenomena and active contribution to democratic processes and the protection of human rights among students,

- deepening the understanding of human rights and their implementation in the specific socio-political contexts of Southeast Europe,
- enhancing analytical and research skills necessary for the critical analysis of legal and political systems, public policies, and processes of democratization,
- strengthening academic writing and research competencies, including mastery of relevant methodologies in social sciences and the humanities through an interdisciplinary approach,
- fostering dialogical, communication, and collaborative skills, along with the promotion of critical thinking, and to
- promoting regional cooperation and intercultural dialogue through the education of international students, academic mobility, joint research initiatives, and international academic events.

The coordinating institution is the University of Sarajevo, in cooperation with the University of Bologna. The organization of the program is entrusted to the Professor Zdravko Grebo Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, while the teaching is carried out by professors and associates from partner universities, as well as experts from partner institutions.

2.2. Scientific/art fields of study

The program is interdisciplinary and belongs to general fields of social sciences and humanities. It combines philosophy, political sciences, sociology, social work and policy, and law.

2.3. Organisation and duration, minimum ECTS credits required for graduation

Master's Program in Democracy and Human Rights in Southeast Europe is a one-year interdisciplinary program. It is conducted and organized in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Classes are held at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Sarajevo; internships are carried out in partner organizations, national institutions, and civil society organizations across Southeast Europe; and mobility in Italy is organized by the University of Bologna at the Residential University Center in Bertinoro.

It is implemented over two semesters:

First Semester: 30 ECTS

- Philosophy and Theory of Human Rights and Democracy (5 ECTS)
- Nationalism, Identity, and Conflict (6 ECTS)
- Democratization and EU Integration (7 ECTS)
- UN and European Human Rights System (8 ECTS)
- Research Methodologies (4 ECTS)

Second Semester: 30 ECTS

- Peace and Human Rights (5 ECTS)
- One Elective Course (3 ECTS: Children's Rights, Migration and Human Rights, Environmental Rights and Global Challenges)
- Internship (7 ECTS)
- Writing and Defense of Final Thesis (15 ECTS)

The program carries 60 ECTS credits, which is the minimum required to complete the studies and can only be pursued as a regular self-funded student.

2.4. Language of instruction

The program is fully taught in English.

2.5. Admission and Selection

Admission to the ERMA program is carried out by the Rules of Study for the first and second cycle of studies, integrated, professional, and specialist studies of the University of Sarajevo. The call for enrollment of students in the first year of the second cycle of studies is publicly announced on the website of the University of Sarajevo and in daily newspapers, with the prior approval of the competent Ministry, no later than two months before the start of the academic year. The call is published in English on the websites of the CIS, UNSA, and the Global Campus of Human Rights, and is actively promoted through social media.

Selection and enrollment are based on transparent and clearly defined criteria. Admission requires completion of a bachelor's degree in the field of humanities or social sciences with a minimum of 240 ECTS credits. Ranking is based solely on academic performance during previous studies. There is no language proficiency test.

As an international program, ERMA considers the origin of applicants and forms three ranking lists: students from Southeastern European countries, students from EU countries and Azerbaijan, and students from other countries. This criterion aligns with legal regulations and societal needs analysis, as well as project-based donor resources available for the implementation of this study program.

Since the language of instruction is English, fluency in English is a prerequisite for admission. The following international language certificates are accepted:

1. TOEFL – minimum 560 for the written test, 220 for the computer-based test, and at least 83 for internet-based testing (IBT).

2. IELTS BRITISH COUNCIL: minimum 6.5 and not less than 6.0 in individual sections.
3. Cambridge C1 (CAE) and C2 (CPE)
4. Duolingo Test Certificate - minimum score of 115

Applicants whose native language is English or who studied in English during university confirm their competence through transcripts and certificates issued by their universities.

The selection is carried out by the Academic Council of the program and approved by the CIS Council based on application forms and documents that applicants must submit in English:

- Completed online application form
- University diploma (BA and MA)
- Transcript of records (BA and MA)
- Proof of English proficiency
- Citizenship certificate
- Birth certificate
- Scanned the first passport page

2.6. Qualifications awarded

Upon completion of all responsibilities outlined in the study plan and program, students are awarded two diplomas: one from the University of Bologna and one from the University of Sarajevo.

Academic title and professional qualification after completing the second cycle: Master of Human Rights and Democracy.

2.7. Progression through the study program

Admission requires a minimum of 240 ECTS credits earned through prior study at universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina or abroad. Upon fulfilling all requirements and obtaining 60 ECTS credits, graduates earn a total of 300 ECTS, ensuring eligibility for the third cycle of studies.

2.8. Grading scale and assessment criteria

The allocation of ECTS credits and grading is carried out for each course based on class attendance and active participation during lectures, seminar papers and essays; oral and written exams; and the quality of preparation and defense of the master's thesis. Students are also required to complete evaluations for each component of the program. Students are obliged to prepare for lectures by reading the required literature beforehand. They must attend at least 80% of all classes and actively participate in lectures. Attendance in

all components of the program is mandatory. Grading for all courses, as well as the final thesis, is conducted in accordance with the following scale:

Descriptive Grade	International Scale	Score Range	University of Sarajevo	University of Bologna
Exceptional performance with no or only minor errors	A	95-100	10	30 honors - 30
Above average, with some mistakes	B	85-94	9	29-28
Average, with noticeable mistakes	C	75-84	8	27-25
Generally good but with significant flaws	D	65-74	7	24-21
Meets minimum criteria	E	55-64	6	20-18
Does not meet minimum criteria	F	< 54	5	<18

2.9. Quality Assurance

The quality assurance process is conducted in accordance with the established quality management system of the University of Sarajevo. The normative foundation of the quality assurance and management system consists of general acts of the University, particularly:

- a) Statute of the University of Sarajevo
- b) Regulation on the Quality Assurance and Management System of the University of Sarajevo
- c) Rules of Student Enrollment for first, second cycle, integrated, professional, and specialist studies
- d) Regulation on Student Evaluation of Academic Staff Performance and Study Program Implementation
- e) Regulation on the Procedure for Adoption and Modification of Study Programs at the University of Sarajevo
- f) Policy on the quality of study programs

The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies 'Prof. Dr. Zdravko Grebo' strives for continuous improvement in the quality of academic programs, particularly due to the high relevance of the offered higher education qualifications on the labor market. Preserving and enhancing the quality of teaching and assessing the effectiveness of the academic program is a strategic priority of the CIS as a sub-organizational unit of the University of Sarajevo. To this end, CIS aims to strengthen and expand its resources, develop strategic plans based on indicators from the European Higher Education Area, applicable legal

regulations, recommendations from the Agency for Science and Higher Education, as well as the recommendations and general acts of the University of Sarajevo.

The quality assurance system is formalized and based on: self-evaluation and external evaluation. The quality and success of the program are monitored at the level of the entire study program and fall under the jurisdiction of the Center Council. Within the CIS, a Quality Assurance Committee is active. Teaching performance is continuously evaluated according to procedures applied in the second cycle of studies, which includes:

- student evaluation of the content and implementation of the program; evaluation of teaching staff by students; evaluation of lectures, thematic relevance, availability of resources for learning and teaching, support, and the overall program;
- analysis of exam pass rates; analysis of study completion success;
- Periodic evaluation of the implementation plan and curriculum by participating teaching staff.

Public information about the academic program is provided through the website and notice board of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (information package, class schedule, exam announcements, and public defenses of final theses). All information and learning resources are made available to students through the Moodle learning platform.

3. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

3.1. Learning outcomes

After graduation, the student:

KNOWLEDGE

- Demonstrates systematic knowledge and understanding of theoretical principles and contemporary issues in the human rights and democracy field from an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Possesses knowledge of the specificities of post-conflict societies and transitional processes in Southeast Europe.
- Knows advanced research methods necessary for analyzing various complex social processes in the field of democracy and human rights.
- shows familiarity with European and UN legal frameworks and systems for the protection of human rights.

SKILLS

- Has advanced knowledge of democratic systems, human rights, and their development, particularly in the context of Southeast Europe.
- Demonstrates advanced analytical and research skills necessary for the critical analysis of political and legal systems, policies, and social phenomena related to democratization and the protection of human rights.
- Has the ability to develop theoretically sound and methodologically sustainable research projects and produce research reports.
- Demonstrates advanced academic writing and research skills, and the ability to apply appropriate research methodologies in the democracy and human rights field.
- Easily applies acquired knowledge and understanding to solve problems within the interdisciplinary context of human rights and democracy.
- Applies conceptual and abstract thinking as well as creativity to find alternative solutions to social issues in democracy and human rights field.

COMPETENCIES

Professional:

- Has the ability to work in multicultural teams and on international projects involving human rights protection, democratization, and civil society development.
- Integrates acquired knowledge when addressing complex social issues in the field of democracy and human rights.

- Demonstrates the ability to think critically about social and ethical responsibilities related to the application of knowledge and judgments in this field.
- Effectively communicates knowledge, reflections, and conclusions on topics covered by the study program, using appropriate language, clearly and unambiguously, to both specialized and non-specialized audiences.

Personal:

- Is capable of advancing knowledge to a higher level, deepening understanding of the field of study, and continuously developing personal skills through independent learning and growth.
- Demonstrates the ability for continuous learning and further studies pursuit in an independent and self-directed manner.
- Is capable of constructive and effective collaboration within international and interdisciplinary teams.
- Actively leads and initiates actions and contributes to social change and development in democracy and human rights field.

3.2. Curriculum

I SEMESTER	COURSE TITLE	ECTS	HOURS (L+S)
DHRFH101	PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY	5	40
DHRNI102	NATIONALISM, IDENTITY, AND CONFLICT	6	46
DHRDI103	DEMOCRATISATION AND EU INTEGRATION	7	50
DHRPS104	UN AND EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS	8	58
DHRRM105	RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES	4	42
TOTAL		30	236
II SEMESTER	COURSE TITLE	ECTS	HOURS (L+S)
DHRPH206	PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS	5	40

-	ELECTIVE COURSE	3	16
DHRIN207	INTERNSHIP	7	160
DHRMT208	MASTER THESIS WRITING AND DEFENCE	15	
TOTAL		30	216
TOTAL TWO SEMESTERS		60	

	ELECTIVE COURSES		
DHREL201	CHILDREN'S RIGHTS	3	16
DHREL202	MIGRATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS	3	16
DHREL203	ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES	3	16

3.3 Program structure and progression to the next semester

Under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), one academic year of study equals 60 ECTS credits. This one-year interdisciplinary master's program has 60 ECTS credits, sufficient for graduation and can only be attended as a regular self-funded student. It consists of 6 compulsory courses, 1 elective course, internship, and thesis writing/defense. It is implemented over two semesters:

First Semester: 30 ECTS

- Philosophy and Theory of Human Rights and Democracy (5 ECTS)
- Nationalism, Identity, and Conflict (6 ECTS)
- Democratization and EU Integration (7 ECTS)
- UN and European Human Rights System (8 ECTS)
- Research Methodologies (4 ECTS)

Second Semester: 30 ECTS

- Peace and Human Rights (5 ECTS)
- One Elective Course (3 ECTS: Children's Rights, Migration and Human Rights, Environmental Rights and Global Challenges)
- Internship (7 ECTS)
- Writing and Defense of Final Thesis (15 ECTS)

Students may proceed to defend their thesis upon successfully completing all previous obligations, including the mandatory internship. Students write theses under the supervision of a mentor. Thesis writing in Italy takes place over 30 days in June and July. Students are required to submit a working version of their thesis to the program for plagiarism check and to the supervisor for final revision by the end of the academic stay in Italy. Students who do not submit a draft version by the end of the academic stay in Italy will present their thesis in the following academic year. The final corrected version of the thesis should be submitted by the beginning of September. Thesis defense is held in Sarajevo at the end of September, followed by the graduation ceremony and, once administrative procedures are completed, the awarding of diplomas.

3.4. Internship documentation

As an integral part of the curriculum, the program includes a mandatory professional internship lasting four weeks full-time (7 ECTS). Students complete the internship at partner organizations and institutions under professional supervision and receive ECTS credits upon passing the relevant checks, i.e., submitting a logbook and report on the internship, along with a detailed evaluation report from the expert supervisor in the organization where the internship was completed. Students cannot complete internships in their home country (citizenship) as the internship is part of the program's regional mobility.

Interaction with professional practice is ensured throughout the program through guest lectures, study visits to international organizations, and civil society organizations.

During their studies, students also take a research methodologies course (4 ECTS), which, in addition to theoretical lectures, includes a series of practical seminars aimed at developing their academic writing and research skills, as well as designing and writing the thesis, which includes a research component.

3.5. Graduation requirements

The study program is completed by passing all exams and by writing and defending a final master's thesis.

Course instructors, in consultation with visiting lecturers and academic associates, are required to propose one or more thesis topics with appropriate explanations no later than the end of the first semester. A student may also propose their own topic in consultation with a mentor of their choosing. The topic (area) of the final master's thesis must be selected from within the field of the study program. The student chooses the thesis topic after the completion of the first semester, and no later than the beginning of the second semester, and must formally register the topic according to the procedure by the end of April at the latest.

The application, preparation, defense, and publication of the final master's thesis are governed by the rules of study at the University of Sarajevo.

The final master's thesis, after receiving a positive evaluation from the members of the assessment and defense committee, is defended publicly. Public defenses are held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, before a three-member committee. The final thesis is graded.

Graduates are awarded two diplomas: one from the University of Sarajevo and one from the University of Bologna.