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Human Rights at the Local Level – the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life: A Comparative Analysis

Prawa człowieka na poziomie lokalnym – Konwencja w sprawie likwidacji wszelkich form dyskryminacji kobiet oraz Europejska Karta Równości Kobiet i Mężczyzn w Życiu Lokalnym. Analiza porównawcza

• Abstract •

This article explores the role of cities in the implementation and normative evolution of international human rights law through a comparative analysis of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. Although international human rights law traditionally assigns primary responsibility to states, cities increasingly engage in translating and operationalizing international gender equality standards within local governance. The article addresses whether cities merely implement existing human rights obligations or also contribute to the development of new normative frameworks. Using qualitative legal and comparative methods, the study contrasts CEDAW, a legally binding universal treaty, with the Charter, a voluntary soft-law instrument addressed to local and regional authorities. It argues that, while the Charter does not create new binding rights under international

• Abstrakt •

W artykule przedstawiono analizę roli miast w implementacji oraz tworzeniu prawa międzynarodowego praw człowieka poprzez analizę porównawczą Konwencji w sprawie likwidacji wszelkich form dyskryminacji kobiet oraz Europejskiej Karty Równości Kobiet i Mężczyzn w Życiu Lokalnym. Choć prawo międzynarodowe praw człowieka tradycyjnie przypisuje podstawową odpowiedzialność państwom, miasta coraz częściej angażują się w operacjonalizację międzynarodowych standardów równości płci w ramach lokalnego zarządzania. W artykule postawiono pytanie, czy miasta jedynie wdrażają istniejące zobowiązania w zakresie praw człowieka, czy też przyczyniają się do rozwoju nowych praw. Wykorzystując jakościowe metody analizy prawniczej i porównawczej, w badaniu zestawiono Konwencję – wiążący uniwersalny traktat – z Kartą, będącą formalnie niewiążącym instrumentem *soft law* skierowanym do władz lokalnych i regionalnych. Autorka dowodzi, że choć Karta nie tworzy nowych praw

law, it advances rights-like claims and governance obligations tailored to the local level. The article concludes that the Charter complements CEDAW by strengthening the multi-level implementation of gender equality norms.

Keywords: European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; human rights; implementation; law-making

wiążących w sensie ścisłym prawa międzynarodowego, rozwija roszczenia o charakterze praw oraz obowiązki zarządcze dostosowane do poziomu lokalnego. W konkluzji artykułu stwierdzono, że Karta uzupełnia CEDAW, wzmacniając wielopoziomową implementację norm równości płci.

Słowa kluczowe: Europejska Karta Równości Kobiet i Mężczyzn w Życiu Lokalnym; Konwencja w sprawie likwidacji wszelkich form dyskryminacji kobiet; prawa człowieka; implementacja; tworzenie prawa

1. Introduction

In international law, the State is conceived as a single legal subject, irrespective of its internal constitutional or administrative arrangements, whether unitary or federal. Upon becoming a party to an international treaty, a State assumes comprehensive responsibility for fulfilling the obligations arising therefrom, particularly in the field of human rights. Accordingly, only States may be the subjects of individual or inter-State complaint procedures established under international human rights treaties, and only States are required to submit periodic reports on the implementation of these treaties. In proceedings before international human rights bodies, a State cannot evade responsibility by attributing alleged violations to sub-national or local authorities (Human Rights Council, 2015; Cassese, 2005; Warbrick, 2003).

Although primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights rests with central authorities, local governments may play an auxiliary role in the implementation of international obligations. Following the ratification of a human rights treaty, a State may entrust the execution of its provisions to lower tiers of governance. It is at the local level that national human rights policies and strategies are operationalized, which requires the engagement of local authorities not only in implementation but also, increasingly, in policy development (Human Rights Council, 2015). Nonetheless, as discussed below, contemporary cities often act with a degree of autonomy that goes beyond delegated implementation.

Indeed, cities have become increasingly active both in advancing international human rights norms and in giving them practical effect. In some instances, municipalities implement human rights treaties that their respective States have ratified; in others, they adopt and apply treaty standards that their host States have not

formally accepted, thereby circumventing State inaction and effectively exercising functions traditionally associated with the State. Illustrative examples include San Francisco and Los Angeles, which have implemented the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through the San Francisco CEDAW Ordinance (1998) and Los Angeles Ordinance No. 175735 (2003), despite the United States not having ratified the Convention. Cities may also precede States in recognizing emerging human rights. For instance, Montreal, in its Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (2005), acknowledged the right to water prior to its recognition as a human right by Canada in 2012 (Grigolo, 2017, p. 17) and before its affirmation by the international community through the United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2010 (UN General Assembly Res. 64/292, 2010).

Regarding the implementation of human rights conventions at the local level, municipalities can employ a range of instruments, including the adoption of non-binding resolutions, data collection, gender-sensitive analyses, voluntary initiatives developed in cooperation with private-sector actors, and the enactment of binding local legislation. All of these measures reflect the phenomenon of localization of human rights (for more details, see: Ezer, 2022). The localization of human rights has emerged as a relatively recent development in global politics and is shaped by competing narratives advanced by a range of stakeholders. One such narrative, commonly described as "human rights in the city", emphasizes the application of international human rights norms within urban settings. Drawing on instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this approach aims to operationalize global human rights standards through concrete measures adopted at the municipal level. Cities that identify as "human rights cities" commit themselves to promoting human rights, equality, and peace, while encouraging civic participation in a socio-political process in which human rights function as core values and normative reference points. A distinct yet related perspective, known as the "right to the city", focuses on the entitlement of all urban residents to access, participate in, and benefit from city life in its entirety, including urban services, spaces, and opportunities (Kempin Reuter, 2019, p. 383).

An additional and particularly innovative mechanism is the conclusion of inter-city agreements, as exemplified by the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City (2000) and the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life (2006/2022). Consequently, the local implementation of international human rights treaties may operate on two distinct but interconnected levels: the municipal and the inter-city. The latter is especially noteworthy, as it frequently transcends mere implementation and may encompass the articulation

of more ambitious objectives or even proposals for new international regulatory standards that exceed those adopted by States.

This article examines the proactive role of cities in both the development and the implementation of international human rights law. The main research question is whether cities only implement human rights or also create or propose new regulations and standards. Following a brief introductory section, it analyses the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life in comparison with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The article then reflects on the normative implications of international agreements concluded by cities, before offering final observations. By comparing universal inter-State instruments with European inter-city agreements and examining their practical application, the study sheds light on the evolving position of cities within contemporary human rights governance. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates in international relations, extending beyond the traditional confines of international law scholarship.

The research employs a qualitative methodology that combines formal-legal analysis and comparative inquiry. It focuses on both legally binding and non-binding instruments, with particular attention to their substantive content, including the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life (hereinafter referred to as the Charter) and CEDAW. This is accompanied by a comparative assessment of these instruments and, only supplementarily, by an analysis of the relevant scholarly literature.

2. Human rights of women in CEDAW and the Charter

2.1. General outline

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) constitutes the cornerstone of the international legal framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights. Adopted in 1979 under the auspices of the United Nations, CEDAW establishes legally binding obligations for States parties to eliminate discrimination against women in all spheres of life, encompassing political, economic, social, cultural, civil, and family relations (Arts. 1 and 3). By contrast, the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life (2006/2022) is a non-binding, soft-law instrument addressed to local and regional authorities, designed to operationalize gender equality principles within the everyday governance of municipalities and regions. It was adopted within the

framework of the transnational city network, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in 2006; in 2022, a few amendments were added. Common substantive themes include political participation and decision-making (CEDAW – Arts. 17, 8; the Charter – preamble, Principle 3, Arts. 1–3, 7, 30, 39), employment and economic equality (CEDAW – Arts. 11, 13, 14; the Charter – Arts. 11, 18, 25, 27, 35), education and lifelong learning (CEDAW – Arts. 5, 10, 14; the Charter – Arts. 13, 18, 37), health and well-being (CEDAW – Arts. 10, 12, 14; the Charter – Arts. 14, 20, 37 – on sexual and reproduction health rights), social inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups (CEDAW – preamble, Art. 14; the Charter – Principle 2, Arts. 3, 10, 18, 37), and combating gender stereotypes (CEDAW – Arts. 5, 10; the Charter – Principle 4, Arts. 2, 6, 9–10, 13–14, 16, 17, 20, 27, 34).

At this point, it is worth indicating that the key difference is that CEDAW establishes binding international obligations for States, while the Charter translates equality principles into practical governance commitments at the local level. Despite their differing legal nature and institutional scope, the two instruments are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Nevertheless, the cities signing the Charter "make a formal public commitment to the principle of equality of women and men in local life" (Art. 4).

2.2. Normative foundations and values

At the level of normative foundations, both CEDAW and the Charter are grounded in the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and human dignity (CEDAW – in the very title, preamble, Arts. 1–4, 7–8, 10–16, 23; the Charter – in the very title, preamble, Principles 1–6, Part II Implementation, Arts. 1, 3–6, 8–13, 15–17, 19, 22–27, 30, 34, 37). CEDAW explicitly situates gender equality within the broader international human rights architecture, drawing on the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenants on Human Rights (preamble). Similarly, the Charter affirms equality between women and men as a fundamental democratic value and a prerequisite for social justice, sustainable development, and good governance at the local level. In this sense, the Charter derives its normative legitimacy from international human rights law, with CEDAW serving as a key reference point and a tool for local implementation of international gender equality standards (the Charter's preamble, Arts. 24, 26, 27, 30, 31).

2.3. Scope of application

In terms of scope and level of application, the two instruments differ significantly. CEDAW addresses States parties and focuses on national legal systems, requiring constitutional, legislative, judicial, and administrative reforms to ensure substantive equality (Arts. 2–3). As mentioned, its provisions extend across a wide range of policy areas, including nationality, education, employment, health, family relations, and rural development. The Charter, by contrast, is tailored to the competencies of local and regional authorities (Arts. 7–8, 10, 13–14, 22, 27, 29 and 37 expressly mention such competencies). Its Art. 8 states that "[t]he commitments set forth in this Charter apply to a Signatory only insofar as they, or relevant aspects thereof, fall within the scope of its legal powers". It is worth noting that the Council of Europe's European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985), which has been signed and ratified by the vast majority of European States, affirms the right and capacity of local authorities, within the bounds of the law, to regulate and administer a substantial proportion of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interest of the local population. Within this framework, the implementation and promotion of the right to equality should be understood as an essential component of local self-government (European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, 2022, p. 2).

Concerning the scope of application, while the CEDAW defines what States must ensure at the national level, the Charter focuses on how local authorities can act within their competencies. The Charter translates equality principles into concrete measures within the sphere of local governance, where many gender inequalities are most acutely experienced. Here the Charter emphasizes areas such as urban planning (Art. 25), public transport (Art. 26), housing (Art. 19), education (Art. 13) and care services (Arts. 14, 15, 17), local employment policies (Art. 11), public space (Arts. 2–3), and community safety (Art. 21). The Charter explicitly adopts a gender mainstreaming approach across all municipal functions. The Charter's strong emphasis on gender mainstreaming (Principle 5), gender assessments (Art. 9), and gender-responsive budgeting further operationalizes CEDAW's Art. 2, which mandates institutional and policy reforms to eliminate discriminatory practices. The Charter also emphasizes intersectionality, encompassing race, ethnic origin, membership in a national minority, religion, age, disability, migration status, and socio-economic position as prohibited grounds of discrimination (Art. 10 and a new Art. 34 added in 2022). The Charter's intersectional approach expands upon CEDAW's substantive equality framework by explicitly addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. This development is consistent with the interpretative evolution of

CEDAW reflected in the Committee's General Recommendations, for example, the ones related to women with disabilities (General Recommendation No. 18 (1991)), to the rights of rural women (General Recommendation No. 34 (2016)), and to indigenous women and girls (General Recommendation No. 39 (2022)).

2.4. Implementation mechanism

A further point of comparison concerns implementation mechanisms. CEDAW and its Protocol establish a formal system of international accountability through periodic State reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which issues concluding observations and authoritative general recommendations (Arts. 18, 21). Although enforcement relies primarily on political and reputational pressure, the Convention nonetheless creates clear legal duties for States. Moreover, in 1999, the Optional Protocol to the Convention was adopted, which envisages the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, towards the States that ratified the Protocol, to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction (Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1999).

The Charter, by contrast, relies on voluntary commitment and can be regarded as a form of soft law. Adopting inter-city transnational agreements is an expression of a broader phenomenon: cities increasingly employing the language and concepts of international law, entering into agreements, or adopting international declarations that articulate commitments commonly characterized as soft law. Soft law may be defined as a set of norms that, while not legally binding, play a significant role in shaping the wider normative environment by influencing perceptions of what constitutes reasonable or appropriate conduct by States (Wheatley, 2009, p. 220; Snyder, 2023, p. 10). Although this understanding of soft law is traditionally framed in relation to States and international organizations, it is equally applicable to cities and to the inter-city agreements they conclude.

As part of implementation, cities signatory to the Charter undertake to develop equality action plans, allocate resources, collect gender-disaggregated data, consult with relevant stakeholders before adopting equality action plans, disseminate them, and monitor progress at the local level (Part II on the implementation of the Charter). While lacking legal enforceability, the Charter's strength lies in its practical orientation and its emphasis on concrete measures in areas such as policy planning, evaluation, and stakeholder participation.

Additionally, in 2012, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions established the Observatory of the European Charter for Equality to support signatory authorities in implementing the Charter and advancing gender equality at the local level. The Observatory operates as an online platform that disseminates examples of good practice and successful local gender equality policies, while also fostering peer learning among signatories of the Charter. In addition, it provides practical guidance on developing equality action plans and hosts a database, the "Atlas", which offers contact details and direct access to the gender equality action plans adopted by participating authorities (European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, 2022, p. 37). Hence, the role of the Observatory is not one of monitoring, but rather facilitation.

2.5. Examples of complementarities

The two instruments are particularly complementary in terms of substantive equality and proactive measures. CEDAW explicitly recognizes the legitimacy of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between women and men, clarifying that such measures do not constitute discrimination (Art. 4). The Charter reflects this logic by encouraging targeted local actions, gender-sensitive budgeting, and measures to address structural disadvantages in representation, service provision, and access to resources (Principles 5 and 6, Arts. 2 (4), 9 (3), 11 (4)). In this respect, the Charter can be seen as a vehicle for implementing Art. 4 of CEDAW at the sub-national level. In other words, local positive actions under the Charter provide a concrete expression of Art. 4 CEDAW at the sub-national level. In this way, the documents mutually reinforce each other.

The relationship between the two instruments is also evident in their approach to gender-based violence and safety. CEDAW addresses violence against women implicitly through its definition of discrimination (Art. 1) and provisions on suppressing trafficking in women and exploitation of women prostitution (Art. 6), and explicitly through subsequent interpretative practice of the CEDAW Committee, in particular through its General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women where the Committee specified that "[t]he definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Gender-based violence may breach specific provisions of the Convention, regardless of whether those provisions expressly mention

violence" (point 6). It also elaborated on those various provisions. The General Recommendation No. 35 (2017) updated the one from 1992.

The Charter incorporates the prevention of gender-based violence and the promotion of safety in public spaces as central concerns of local policy. Cities undertake to suppress gender violence in various contexts: general gender-based violence (Art. 22), in workplace (Art. 11), trafficking in women (Art. 23), cyber violence (Art. 32), against women elected representatives (Art. 33), and in armed conflicts (Art. 39). By including cyber violence, the Charter is more up to date but such a form of gender-based violence is naturally also prohibited by CEDAW. By linking international standards to urban design, transport planning, lighting, and local support services, the Charter provides a concrete framework for translating global norms into local preventive action (safety is mentioned in provisions concerning these areas). Moreover, the 2022 amendments further align the Charter with CEDAW by incorporating sexual and reproductive health rights, sustainable development, climate justice, and crisis management as gendered governance issues. These provisions echo CEDAW's requirement that equality be ensured not only formally but in lived conditions, particularly in contexts of structural vulnerability and emergencies.

* * *

Overall, the relationship between CEDAW and the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life is best understood as complementary rather than duplicative (see the comparison in Table 1 below). CEDAW establishes universal, legally binding standards and a framework of State responsibility, while the Charter offers an operational tool for embedding those standards within local governance practices. Together, they contribute to a multi-level architecture of gender equality, connecting international human rights law with national policy obligations and local implementation. This vertical integration enhances both the normative coherence and the practical effectiveness of efforts to eliminate discrimination against women.

Table 1. Comparison of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, and CEDAW

European Charter Article	Content/theme (Charter)	Corresponding CEDAW Article(s)	Normative relationship
Principles 1–6	Equality as a fundamental right; elimination of discrimination; gender mainstreaming	Arts. 1–3	Defines and operationalizes CEDAW's core equality obligations

Table 1 (cont.)

European Charter Article	Content/theme (Charter)	Corresponding CEDAW Article(s)	Normative relationship
Arts. 1–3	Equal participation in political and civic life at the local level	Art. 7	Local implementation of women's political rights
Arts. 2, 6, 9–10, 13–14, 16, 20, 27, 34	Elimination of gender stereotypes	Arts. 5, 10	Direct transposition of CEDAW obligations
Part II, Art. 9	Gender assessments, equality action plans	Art. 2	Implements institutional reform duties
Arts. 10, 34	Addressing multiple and intersecting discrimination	Arts. 1–3, 14	Expands substantive equality
Arts. 14, 37	Access to sexual and reproductive health services	Art. 12	Localization of women's right to health
Arts. 27, 30, 31, 38	Gender equality in sustainable development and climate policy	No direct provision	Integrates equality into development
Art. 39	Gender-responsive crisis management and safety planning	No direct provision	Application of CEDAW in emergencies

Source: Author's own elaboration.

3. New rights in the Charter?

The crucial question is: Does the Charter propose any new rights compared to CEDAW? The above analysis demonstrates that the Charter proposes no new binding human rights in the strict international-law sense, but normatively, it offers new or expanded entitlements, governance duties, and thematic rights framings compared to CEDAW. As mentioned, CEDAW remains a binding treaty under international law, while the Charter is a voluntary soft-law instrument addressed to local and regional authorities. Accordingly, the Charter does not expand the catalogue of women's rights under international law, does not modify States' treaty obligations under CEDAW, and cannot create enforceable individual rights in the same way as CEDAW. Still, although not legally binding, the Charter introduces

rights-like claims and governance obligations that go beyond CEDAW's original textual scope, particularly in five areas.

The first is an explicit right to gender equality in local governance. The Charter frames gender equality in local and regional governance as a fundamental democratic right, not merely as a derivative obligation of the State. It is important to note that CEDAW focuses on State-level obligations, whereas the Charter explicitly assigns autonomous responsibility to municipalities and regions. Hence, this normative innovation can be referred to as decentralization of human rights responsibility.

The second area encompasses a right to gender-responsive urban space and infrastructure, which can be termed "the right to a gender-equal city" (Wu, 2024; similar to "the right to the gendered city" in Fenster, 2005). In this regard, the Charter acknowledges equality claims related to urban planning, public transportation, housing, public safety, and access to public spaces. At the same time, CEDAW does not explicitly address urban design, spatial justice, and city infrastructure as gendered systems. Actually, CEDAW mentions "urban" only once in Art. 10, when States are obliged to ensure "[t]he same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas". CEDAW is a universal treaty that prohibits discrimination against all women in urban and rural environments.

The third field refers to climate, environmental, and crisis-related gender rights (introduced in the 2022 amendments to the Charter). The Charter promotes gender equality in climate adaptation and mitigation, disaster preparedness, heatwaves, droughts, energy poverty, and environmental sustainability. New Art. 38 additionally recognizes "the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right that must take account of women and girls' needs".

These issues are not addressed in the CEDAW text. They appear only later, via the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendations (for example, General Recommendation No. 37 on the Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change, 2018), rather than in treaty articles.

Another important area of regulation is the explicit intersectionality as a recognized operative principle. The Charter (especially post-2022) explicitly recognizes multiple and intersecting discrimination and overlapping vulnerabilities (age, disability, migration status, poverty). Intersectionality is not explicit in CEDAW's articles. It emerges later through interpretative practice (General Recommendations mentioned above). Hence, the Charter established intersectionality as a structural governance obligation, not merely an interpretive tool.

Finally, procedural rights-like guarantees of participation in local decision-making, co-design of policies, gender-responsive budgeting, transparency, and monitoring

at the municipal level were emphasized in the Charter. CEDAW mandates policy reform but does not specify procedural tools, such as gender budgeting or equality action plans, at the city level.

4. Conclusions

The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life operationalizes CEDAW at the sub-national level by translating States' international obligations into concrete commitments for local and regional authorities. While CEDAW imposes binding obligations on States Parties, the Charter functions as a soft-law instrument that promotes vertical integration of gender equality norms through local governance structures. As such, the two documents complement each other.

At the normative level, the Charter's recognition of equality as a fundamental right and its commitment to eliminating both direct and indirect discrimination closely mirror CEDAW Arts. 1–3, which define discrimination and require States to pursue policies that eliminate it in all spheres. In the political domain, Charter provisions on balanced participation and representation of women in decision-making bodies align directly with CEDAW Art. 7. This participation and representation also has an international aspect. Art. 8 of CEDAW obliges States parties to ensure women the opportunity to represent their States in international organizations. The Charter mirrors these provisions in its Art. 30, but in reference to women's involvement in twinning relationships, transnational city networks, and other forms of decentralized inter-city cooperation.

While the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life does not create new legally binding human rights beyond those enshrined in CEDAW, it significantly expands the normative landscape of gender equality by introducing rights-like claims and governance obligations tailored to the local level. In particular, the Charter advances innovative framings of gender equality in urban space, climate resilience, and intersectional governance, thereby complementing and operationalizing CEDAW in areas not explicitly addressed by the Convention's original text.

As to the question posed in the introduction to this article, whether cities are making or merely implementing international human rights standards (on the example of the Charter), cities doubtlessly implement human rights conventions. In this context, Kamuf Ward (2016, p. 85) argues that efforts to localize human rights are based on the understanding that human rights standards can enhance governance and improve policy outcomes. Human rights function both as a means of articulating societal needs and as an instrument through which public authorities

may respond to those needs. A human rights-based approach emphasizes transparency, accountability, and inclusive participation in decision-making, all of which constitute key elements of democratic governance. At its core, such an approach prioritizes policies that address the structural roots of inequality and discrimination. Cities deepen a commitment not only to legal obligations but also to the values they represent and the principles of good governance, benefiting local communities most of all. Hence, the implementing role is the dominant one. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this article, the local implementation of international human rights treaties may operate on two distinct but interconnected levels: the municipal and the inter-city. The Charter is an example of the latter level of implementation.

However, cities in a way contribute to making international human rights law by proposing new rights-like claims and governance obligations like the ones mentioned in the five areas above: a right to gender equality in local governance, a right to a gender-equal city, gender equality in climate change adaptation and mitigation, crisis management, explicit recognition of intersecting forms of discrimination, and procedural tools or guarantees of women participation in decision-making and co-creation of policies.

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