

[Thank you and farewell to Michael Ineichen](#)

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After almost 14 years with ISHR, starting as an intern and departing as a Programme Director, Michael Ineichen is leaving us to take up an exciting role with Amnesty International Switzerland. We thank Michael for his deep commitment to human rights defenders and for his remarkable contribution to laws and mechanisms for their protection.



Over that period Michael has provided strategic advice, solidarity and support to literally hundreds of human rights defenders and substantially strengthened laws, policies and mechanisms for their recognition and protection. He has also contributed substantially to the development and impact of ISHR.

Among Michael's many contributions, we count:

- Representing ISHR and supporting human rights defenders with their strategic engagement with the Human Rights Council over the course of more than 40 sessions
- Substantially informing and influencing literally every resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council to date on human rights defenders and on civil society space, including groundbreaking resolutions on environmental human rights defenders, on defenders of economic, social and cultural rights, and on counter-terrorism and human rights defenders
- Helping build ISHR's Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme (*Michael is pictured above - in the middle - together with some of its 2018 alumni*) and our programme to support human rights defenders working in highly restrictive environments
- Putting human rights defenders at the heart of the business and human rights agenda and co-founding an innovative Business Network on Civic Freedoms and Human Rights Defenders
- Advising numerous States and businesses with the development and implementation of human rights defender policies and guidelines
- Shaping ISHR internal policy in key areas including digital security, environmental sustainability and risk management

As a partner of human rights defenders Michael always exhibited values of solidarity and respect. As a lobbyist of diplomats he was always strategic, principled and pragmatic. And as a colleague at ISHR he was always deeply committed and collegial. From overseeing the development of major policy to fixing colleagues' computers or the photocopier - Michael really did it all.

In their words to Michael:

- 'Few human rights practitioners have contributed more than you to ensuring the global human rights movement's ability to effectively engage and influence the UN human rights system. Even fewer have accomplished the type of enduring and important impact you have had on the betterment of that system as a tool for rights defenders around the world.' - NGO representative
- 'You have made a greater contribution than almost any other person to building the effectiveness of the Human Rights Council, against the odds.' - UN expert
- 'Your ability to guide and support, friendly nature and never-give-up attitude are features that have inspired me to try to always do more and always do better. I highly appreciate this and I can testify that you have truly made a difference.' - Diplomat to the UN in Geneva
- 'We thank you for the work you have done to advance civic space generally and all your work in changing norms and standards for the betterment of many.' - NGO colleague
- 'It's been a pleasure to work with you. Your engagement and passion is genuine and you have been an inspiration! You've been a star in ISHR's dream team, always working tirelessly to put human rights defenders first.' - Ministry of Foreign Affairs official
- 'I learnt a lot from you: you have a sharp mind, you know how to persuade and build alliances, you are good with your words - but most importantly, you have the right values and a big heart, and you know how to bring them into what you do.' - NGO colleague

While very sad to see Michael leave, the new role at Amnesty International Switzerland will enable him to work on issues close to home and in his mother tongue for the first time in his professional career. It will also provide ISHR with a wonderful colleague and collaborator in Berne, working to influence and shape Swiss human rights policy.

Merci Michi et à très bientôt!

Phil Lynch, Director

Photo: Elena Levina