

# What they had to say about the Court



## François Mitterrand,

President of the French Republic from 1981 to 1995

"The Human Rights Building ... a monument ... to and imbued with hope"

"The European Convention on Human Rights ... is one of the cornerstones of the edifice you have built. ... This system, which is unique in the world, now carries the hopes of the new European nations."

## Helmut Kohl,

Chancellor of Germany from 1982 to 1998

"... a permanent Human Rights Court – a decisive step forward"



## Jacques Chirac,

President of the French Republic from 1995 to 2007

"Strasbourg: today seat of the European Parliament, of the Council of Europe and of the European Court of Human Rights. Strasbourg occupies a unique position within our continent."



## Angela Merkel,

Chancellor of Germany

"Everyone can assert their rights before the European Court of Human Rights. More than 50,000 people per year use this possibility. It is a system that is unique in the world."

## Václav Havel,

President of the Czech Republic from 1993 to 2003

"... the Human Rights Building ..., I sincerely hope, will before long become the concrete symbol of our shared values that are driving European integration."



## Jean-Paul Costa,

President of the European Court of Human Rights

"The European Court of Human Rights is a 'permanent miracle': we have a system created out of nothing by the member States, whereas its purpose is to pass judgment against them."



## Luzius Wildhaber,

President of the European Court of Human Rights from 1998 to 2007

"It [the Convention] remains by far the most accomplished manifestation of the aspirations expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a permanent legacy from the generation that lived through the horrors of the war and their determination that future generations should not endure the same torment."



## Pierre Pfmilin,

President of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe from 1963 to 1966

"It is not against the member States, but down to their efforts that work is being done here to combat arbitrariness."



## Catherine Lalumière,

Secretary General of the Council of Europe from 1989 to 1994

"... the creation of a single permanent Court to safeguard human rights, the objective being to increase the efficiency and authority of international judicial scrutiny, now accessible to more than 450 million people. This institution, created by the European Commission of Human Rights, is absolutely remarkable."



## Bernard Kouchner,

French Minister for Foreign and European Affairs

"In its noble task of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms the Court is not, alas, as one often hears said, a victim of its success but rather a victim of the failings and erring ways of our States. ... it is the only one in the world that examines individual cases. It is more than just precious, it is irreplaceable."