



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Bringing the Convention home: case-law information, training and outreach

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Bringing the Convention home

The programme “Bringing the Convention closer to home” facilitates access to the Convention at the national level.

The Court’s case-law information, training and outreach programme was initiated in 2012 with a view to improving accessibility to and understanding of leading Convention principles and standards at the national level, in line with the conclusions of the Interlaken, Izmir, Brighton and Brussels Conferences.

Within this programme “to bring the Convention closer to home”, in 2016 the Registry published additional case-law guides and a new handbook in the European law series; updated the institutional film on the Court and launched two further *COURTalks-disCOURs* training videos; increasingly engaged with national-level partners including through web-conferencing and workshops on both case-law and the HUDOC database; offered enhanced HUDOC search features and began offering select publications in formats adapted to tablets, smartphones and e-readers.

With the valuable support of certain governments and many other partners that share the objective of this programme, 2016 also saw a significant increase in the number of cases and case-law publications being offered in languages other than English and French both on the Court’s website and through the dedicated multilingual Twitter account.

The past year also saw the expansion of the new information-sharing network involving the Court and national Superior Courts. The Superior Courts Network now includes twenty-three courts from seventeen States (for further details on this Network see “The Court in 2016”).

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For publication updates please follow the Court’s Twitter account at twitter.com/echrpublication.

DISSEMINATION OF THE COURT'S CASE-LAW

Print and digital collections of the leading cases

Every year, the Bureau of the Court selects approximately thirty of the most important cases for publication in the *Reports of Judgments and Decisions*, an official Court publication designed primarily for legal professionals, libraries and academics.¹

In addition to the print volumes prepared in cooperation with Wolf Legal Publishers, the *Reports* volumes are published online in the Court's e-Reports collection (see the Court's website under [Case-law/Judgments and decisions](#)).

The *Reports* are published in five or six bilingual (English-French) volumes per year accompanied by an index. A cumulative index will be published in early 2017, covering all cases reported from the inception of the single Court in 1998 up to and including 2014. In the near future the *Reports* will also be available in separate monolingual editions.

The Registry would welcome proposals from partners interested in publishing the *Reports* in languages other than English and French.

The HUDOC case-law database

Since the extensive redesign of the database in 2012 the Registry has continued to add features to HUDOC (hudoc.echr.coe.int).² Improvements in 2016 included: a new filter for document types; additional Boolean search features; and the ability to exclude metadata-only documents. An updated and consolidated HUDOC user manual was released and is available in English and French, to be followed by additional language versions in 2017.

The HUDOC interface currently exists in English, French, Russian and Turkish. A Spanish version will be launched in early 2017 and plans are under way to develop Bulgarian, Georgian and Ukrainian versions.

A HUDOC user survey in the four interface languages showed a satisfaction rate between 76% and 86% and generated various suggestions for improvement which are now being examined. The Registry is also studying the feasibility of enabling users to filter results by machine-extracted factual concepts. Such a filter would improve the search experience in particular for HUDOC beginners less familiar with the current HUDOC keywords which are extracted mainly from the Convention text.

1. Quarterly updates to the lists of cases selected for publication in the *Reports* can be found on the Court's website under [Case-law/Judgments and decisions/Reports of judgments and decisions](#).

2. FAQs, manuals and video tutorials on HUDOC are available on the Court's website under [Case-law/Judgments and decisions/HUDOC database/More information](#).

The number of HUDOC visitors decreased by approximately 5% in 2016 (3,803,845 visitors as opposed to 4,013,746 visitors in 2015).

Case-law translations programme

The Registry continued its efforts to improve the accessibility and understanding of the main Convention principles and standards in those member States where neither of the Court's official languages is sufficiently understood. The translations programme has been an important catalyst for setting up a network of partners ensuring the translation of cases and publications into such languages.

An important component of this programme was the four-year project for translating key case-law – principally the leading cases selected by the Court's Bureau – into twelve target languages with the support of the Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF). The beneficiary States of this project were Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine. In the course of this project, which ended in 2016, over 3,500 translations were produced.³ The translations were commissioned from external translators, published in the HUDOC database and further disseminated by national-level partners.⁴

A stakeholder survey conducted towards the end of this project showed a satisfaction rate in excess of 90% as regards the quality of the translations. Well over 90% of the respondents also indicated having had the opportunity to use the translations in legal practice, education and training or in decision-making.

The Registry maintains a standing invitation to States, judicial training centres, associations of legal professionals, NGOs and other partners to offer, for inclusion in HUDOC, any case-law translations to which they have the rights. More than 16,000 additional translations have been provided to the Court through this network. The Registry also references on its website third-party sites hosting translations of the Court's case-law and welcomes suggestions for the inclusion of further sites.⁵

3. For more information, including the lists of project partners and cases selected for translation into each language see the Court's website under [Case-law/Judgments and decisions/Case-law translations](#).

4. The translations are published with a disclaimer since the only authentic language version(s) of a judgment or decision are in one or both of the Court's official languages.

5. More information can be found on the Court's website under [Case-law/Judgments and decisions/Case-law translations/Existing translations/External online collections of translations](#); scroll down to see the list of third-party sites.

As a result of the translations programme, over 20,000 texts in thirty-one languages other than English and French have now been made available in HUDOC, which has become the first port of call for translations of the Court's case-law. The language-specific filter in HUDOC allows for rapid searching of these translations, including in free text. These translations now amount to 15% of all HUDOC content.

20,000

translations

31

languages

In addition to translating select cases, certain States and a significant number of other partners continue to support the Court's work by offering to translate publications, Factsheets, Country Profiles and the like.⁶ These translations are all made available on the Court's website and disseminated via a dedicated Twitter account (see "[Internet site and social media](#)" below).

With the HRTF-supported project having ended in 2016, its longer-term sustainability will ultimately depend on partner institutions in each member State being designated to organise the translation of the Court's leading cases into the national language(s). To that end, the Registrar of the Court wrote to all States in 2013 to suggest that they consider arranging, with effect from 2015, the translation of those cases which the Court's Bureau considers to be of Europe-wide importance. A number of States have responded positively to this invitation. It should be recalled here that the 2015 Brussels Declaration called upon States Parties to promote accessibility to the Court's case-law by translating or summarising significant judgments as required.⁷

Given the interest in the Court's case-law on other continents, the Court has also joined forces with partners such as the EU-funded programme "Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme II, 2015-2017), which has contributed funding for translating select leading cases into Arabic.⁸

6. Some thirty translations were pending at the end of 2016 (see the complete list online under [Case-law/Case-law research reports](#)). Publishers or anyone wishing to translate and/or reproduce Court materials are asked to contact publishing@echr.coe.int for further instructions and in order to avoid duplicating an already pending translation.

7. The Declaration and examples of translation practices adopted in various States are available at: www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/CDDH/REFORMECHR/Publications/Proceedings-Brussels-Conference-2015.pdf.

8. This programme is implemented by the Council of Europe primarily in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as in other Southern Mediterranean countries.

Other publications and information tools

Jurisconsult's Overview of the most significant cases

The Jurisconsult's Overview provides valuable insight into the most important judgments and decisions delivered by the Court each year, setting out the salient aspects of the Court's findings and their relevance to the evolution of its case-law. The annual version of the Overview can be consulted in this Annual Report ("Overview of the Court's case-law") and is also available for purchase as a standalone publication from [Wolf Legal Publishers](#). Both the annual and interim versions (the latter is published halfway through the year) can also be downloaded free of charge from the Court's website, including in "reflowable" EPUB and MOBI formats for users of tablets, smartphones and e-readers.

Case-law Information Note

The Case-law Information Note has played a key role in the dissemination of the Court's case-law since the first monthly edition was published in 1998. It has evolved considerably over the years and now contains, in addition to a monthly round-up of interesting cases from the Court, summaries of cases from other European and international jurisdictions (courtesy of our partners in those courts), a news and publications section and a monthly cumulative index.

The 200th edition of the Information Note published in October 2016 saw two further developments: a new, modern layout in both the provisional (bilingual) and final (monolingual) versions, and also the introduction of "reflowable" EPUB and MOBI formats of the provisional version.

The Information Notes are now being translated *in extenso* into Italian, Russian and Turkish, while certain summaries of particularly important cases are also being translated into other languages. The Court wishes to thank all its partners who have assisted it in this translation process and looks forward to working with new partners wishing to translate the Note into additional languages.

The complete Information Notes and annual indexes are available on the Court's website, while individual legal summaries can be found in the HUDOC database.

Case-law guides and research reports

The Directorate of the Jurisconsult – composed of the Case-Law Information and Publications Division and the Research and Library Division – published four new case-law guides covering Article 7 of the Convention (no punishment without law), Article 15 (derogation in time

of emergency), Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 (right to free elections) and Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 (prohibition of collective expulsions of aliens). It also updated two reports researching the Court's case-law, one on the references to that of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the other relating to non-governmental organisations.

The Directorate of the Jurisconsult also updated its methodological guide on how to make the best use of the HUDOC database, Court publications, newsfeeds and other tools (*Finding and understanding the case-law*).

All these materials are available online under [Case-law/Case-law analysis](#).

Handbooks on European law

In June 2016 the Court and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights launched the *Handbook on European law relating to access to justice*. This Handbook, the fifth in the series, is currently available in a number of EU languages, with further language editions to follow in 2017. An update of the *Handbook on European non-discrimination law* is being prepared and will be launched in the second half of 2017.

Other volumes in this series have covered asylum, borders and immigration; data protection; and the rights of the child. All Handbooks and language editions are available online under [Case-law/Other publications](#).

Pilot series of training videos

The Registry launched, with the cooperation and support of the Council of Europe's Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (the HELP programme, www.coe.int/HELP), two further videos in the pilot series *COURTalks-disCOURs*, one on [asylum](#) and the other on [terrorism](#). These recordings provide legal professionals and civil-society representatives with an overview of the Court's case-law on these topical subjects.

Along with a first video on admissibility criteria launched in 2015, the *COURTalks-disCOURs* videos serve as a training tool for the HELP programme, judicial training institutes and Bar associations, complementing other materials produced by the Court and HELP. All the videos with their

NEW

[Handbook on access to justice](#)

[Videos on asylum and terrorism](#)

[Film on the Court](#)

[Four case-law guides](#)

transcripts have been published online in over ten languages ([Case-law/Case-law analysis/ COURTalks-disCOURs](#)).

Factsheets and Country Profiles

In 2016 the Press Unit prepared five new Factsheets on the Court's case-law concerning, in particular, the right not to be tried or punished twice, gender equality, austerity measures, mass surveillance and surveillance in the workplace. Sixty Factsheets are now available in English and French, many of which have been translated into German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Turkish with the support of, among others, the States concerned and national human-rights institutions. These Factsheets provide the reader with a rapid overview of the most relevant cases concerning a particular topic and are regularly updated to reflect the development of the case-law.

The Press Unit has also prepared Country Profiles covering each of the forty-seven Council of Europe member States. These profiles, which are updated regularly, provide general and statistical information on each State as well as summaries of the most noteworthy cases.

The Factsheets and Country Profiles are available on the Court's website under [Press/Press resources/Factsheets](#) and [Press/Press resources/Country profiles](#).

TRAINING OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Judges and Registry members continued to offer their expertise at case-law training events both at the Court and in member States. In the context of the organisation of training sessions, the Court maintained its long-standing cooperation with the *Conseil d'État*, the Court of Cassation and the *École Nationale de la Magistrature* in France. Cooperation continued with the Supreme Court of Russia and the Permanent Representation of Russia to the Council of Europe, and also with the Swedish National Courts Administration and the Permanent Representation of Turkey to the Council of Europe.

In partnership with the European Judicial Training Network, the Court organised training sessions for judges and prosecutors from the European Union.

In 2016 the Visitors' Unit organised fifty-four training sessions lasting between one and three days for legal professionals from eighteen of the forty-seven member States.

A first training course for German judges, organised in cooperation with the German Ministry of Justice, took place this year.

500
visitor groups

54
training sessions

The training programme set up in 2013 in cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was continued, and two information seminars were organised in 2016 for the Secretaries of the national delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly. The Court also took part in an information seminar organised by the Parliamentary Assembly for the Human Rights Committee of the Georgian Parliament.

Presentations and hands-on workshops were also offered on how to make the best use of the HUDOC database.

Finally, the Registry increasingly engaged with legal professionals and law students through web-conferencing, offering tailored presentations and question-and-answer sessions to Bar associations and law schools in Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

GENERAL OUTREACH

Internet site and social media

The focal point of the Court's communication policy is its website (www.echr.coe.int), which recorded a total of 5,997,669 visits in 2016 (a 1% increase compared with 2015). The website provides a wide range of information on all aspects of the Court's work, including the latest news on its activities and cases; details of the Court's composition, organisation and procedure; Court publications and core Convention materials; statistical and other reports; and information for potential applicants and visitors.

The new multilingual Twitter account (twitter.com/echrpublication) – providing updates on the latest publications, translations and other case-law information tools – generated some 8,000 followers in its first year of operation. Complementing the Press Unit's account (twitter.com/ECHR_Press), this platform seeks to improve understanding of the Court's case-law by conveying relevant information to legal professionals, public officials and NGOs in their own language.

Lastly, the Court's website provides a gateway to the Court library website, which, though specialised in human rights law, also has materials on comparative law and public international law. The library's online catalogue, containing references to the secondary literature on the Convention case-law and Articles, was consulted some 380,800 times in 2016.

Public-relations materials

A new film presenting the European Court of Human Rights has been designed, made and produced by the Public Relations Unit. Aimed at a wide audience, this video describes how the Court works, the challenges

it faces and the range of its activities through examples taken from the case-law. The film has been enthusiastically and unanimously praised for its contemporary approach and ability to make what can sometimes be complex issues more accessible.

Initially produced in the Council of Europe's official languages, [English](#) and [French](#), the film on the Court has subsequently been released in [German](#). It is currently being translated into other official languages of the member States of the Council of Europe.

The "[Applicants](#)" pages, which are designed to assist ordinary individuals in their dealings with the Court, are now available in thirty-six official languages of the member States. They have been updated and amended throughout the year, particularly following the entry into force of the amendments to Rule 47 of the Rules of Court. These pages, which are available in the languages of all the member States, contain all the documents necessary for making an application to the Court together with translations of publications, flow charts and videos, and useful links to help applicants understand how the Court functions. They also host the "SOP" (State of Proceedings) search engine, which provides information on cases assigned to a judicial formation and can be used to find out what stage the proceedings relating to a particular application have reached.

With the help of a voluntary contribution from Ireland, all the Court's hearings are filmed in their entirety and distributed on the Court's Internet site. In 2016 a new milestone of 200 webcasts was reached.

More general documents on the Court's activities, such as [The ECHR in facts and figures 2015](#) and [Overview 1959-2015](#) – with statistics on the cases processed, the judgments delivered, the subject matter of violations found, and violations arranged by Article and by State – have also been published.

The Court has also posted new videos on its YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/EuropeanCourt). To foster awareness of the Convention system among the general public and potential applicants, the videos have been produced in the greatest possible number of official languages of the Council of Europe's member States.

Visits

In 2016 the Visitors' Unit organised 493 information visits for a total of 13,672 members of the legal community. In all, it welcomed a total of 17,872 visitors in 2016 (compared with 19,355 in 2015).

