



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

Filtering Section speeds up processing of cases from highest case-count countries

One of the main challenges facing the Court is the efficient filtering out of the very large number of inadmissible cases brought before it each year. It is estimated that up to 90% of the cases coming into the Court's Registry are found to be inadmissible. Over the years the Court has progressively streamlined this stage of its procedure, but further impetus to this process was given by the entry into force of Protocol No. 14 and the establishment of the Single Judge formation. This meant that a Judge sitting alone, assisted by a Non-Judicial Rapporteur, could declare applications inadmissible, whereas previously three Judges had been required. With a view to making the most of this new procedure and encouraged to innovate in this area by the Inter-Governmental Conference at Interlaken in February 2010, the Court has set up a new Filtering Section centralising the handling of the incoming cases from five of the highest case-count countries: Russia, Turkey, Romania, Ukraine and Poland. These countries account for over half of the cases pending before the Court.

The Filtering Section has been in operation since the beginning of 2011. Its principal function is to carry out a thorough, accurate and immediate sifting of cases to ensure that all applications are placed on the appropriate procedural track, whether submitted to a Single Judge for prompt decision or sent to await examination by a Committee of three judges or Chamber in accordance with the Court's priority policy. By centralising resources and streamlining working methods, it is intended to minimise the time taken to respond to applicants' complaints and to reduce the backlog of unexamined cases.

After six months it is already clear that the creation of the Filtering Section has led to the development and sharing of best practices which have helped to speed up the administrative and legal processing of the incoming complaints.

By the end of June 2011, the Filtering Section had recorded 21,859 new applications. During the same period, 11,369 applications against five States were dealt with by a Single Judge. This is an increase of 42 % compared with 2010.

The Filtering Section is able to sift and place on the right procedural track all the incoming applications. For Ukraine and Poland, all cases identified for treatment by Single Judge are being dealt with immediately. For Romania, the percentage of Single Judge cases dealt with immediately is more than 90%. For Russia and Turkey, the Filtering Section is able to deal with roughly 75% of the Single Judge cases.

Further modifications in organisation and procedure are envisaged in the second half of 2011 to improve efficiency still further.