



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

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Bringing the Convention home

Among notable developments in 2017 was the launch of the HUDOC interface in Spanish.

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 national level, in line with the conclusions of the Interlaken, Izmir, Brighton and Brussels Conferences.

Since the programme began, the Court has gradually developed a set of custom-built tools designed to assist everyone, from the ordinary lay person to the seasoned human-rights practitioner, to gain access to the Convention and the key case-law. In addition to the advanced technology and sophisticated search tools of the HUDOC database, the Court's website contains a wealth of materials for users including general information for potential applicants, thematic Factsheets and Country Profiles, legal summaries compiled in the monthly Case-law Information Notes, detailed case-law guides on an ever-expanding range of Convention Articles, the Overview of the Court's case-law produced by the Jurisconsult's Directorate and the *COURTalks-disCOURs* training videos.

The full range of available materials, together with a methodological guide on how to make optimal use of them, can be found in an explanatory document on the Court's website (under [Case-law/Case-law analysis](#)) entitled *Finding and understanding the case-law*, which is now available in three languages, with other languages to follow.

Among more notable developments in 2017 were the addition of two new case-law guides (including the eagerly awaited guide on Article 8 of the Convention) and the introduction of a scheme for regularly updating all the guides in the series; the launch of the HUDOC interface in Spanish in Madrid; and the signature on 23 November 2017 of a memorandum of agreement for ensuring translations into Spanish of select case-law and publications of the Court.

One of the main features of the Court's case-law information, training and outreach programme has been to secure the translation of as many leading cases as possible into languages other than the Court's

official languages of English and French. With the valuable support of certain governments and many other partners that share the objective of this programme, 2017 also saw a steady increase in the number of cases and case-law publications being offered in so-called “non-official languages”, both on the Court’s website and through the dedicated multilingual Twitter account.

In a break with the past, the decision was taken by the Bureau of the Court at the end of 2017 to discontinue the print version of its official *Reports of Judgments and Decisions* series. Although the official series has played an important role in the dissemination of the Court’s case-law since its first judgment was delivered, it was felt that it had lost much of its relevance in an electronic age when all cases are available for consultation in HUDOC from the date of delivery. The Bureau will, however, continue to select the leading cases for each quarter and, as now, these will be clearly referenced as such both in HUDOC and in a separate list on the Court’s website. Cases in this category will also continue to be translated into the other official language.

DISSEMINATION OF THE COURT’S CASE-LAW

Selection of leading cases

In line with recommendations made during the Interlaken process, the Bureau of the Court identifies those judgments and decisions it considers to be of particular importance, for example, because they make a significant contribution to the development of the Court’s case-law, deal with a new problem of general interest or entail a new interpretation or clarification of principles.

The selected cases can be found either by referring to the annual lists (with hyperlinks to the cases concerned) available on the Court’s website¹ or by selecting “Case Reports” under the “Importance” filter in HUDOC.

Although the selected cases have up till now also been published in the Court’s official *Reports of Judgments and Decisions*, the Bureau has decided to discontinue publication of the print series to enable the Court to focus on its priority case-law dissemination strategies mentioned in the section on “Other publications and information tools” below. The *Reports* series will thus end with the publication of the ECHR 2015 volumes and annual index (expected in mid-2018). A cumulative index of all the cases published from the start of the permanent Court in 1998

1. Under [Case-law/Judgments and decisions/Reports of judgments and decisions/More info](#). The current year list is updated every three months.

to the end of 2014 is also available in print from [Wolf Legal Publishers](#) or in PDF format on the Court's website.

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 2017 included: the use of the https protocol by default, improved mobile responsive design, and the introduction of a sort order for the legal summaries.

The Spanish version of the HUDOC interface was launched in November 2017, meaning that the interface now exists in a total of five languages (English, French, Russian, Spanish and Turkish). Plans are also under way to develop Bulgarian, Georgian and Ukrainian versions. The HUDOC user manual is available in English, French, Spanish and Turkish. Additional language versions will follow.

The Registry is continuing to explore the feasibility of enabling users to filter results by machine-extracted factual concepts (thematic searches). Results thus far have not met expectations but the project is still under way.

The number of HUDOC visits increased by approximately 7% in 2017 (4,058,196 visits as opposed to 3,803,845 visits in 2016).

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.

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. It should be noted 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. The Registry also references on its website third-party sites

23,560
translations

31 languages

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](#).

hosting translations of the Court's case-law and welcomes suggestions for the inclusion of further sites³.

As a result of the translations programme, over 23,560 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.⁴ The language-specific filter in HUDOC allows for rapid searching of these translations, including in free text. These translations now amount to 16.5% of all HUDOC content.

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. Around thirty translations of case-law guides or research reports were published in 2017.⁵ 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).

On 23 November 2017 a memorandum of agreement for procuring and disseminating Spanish translations of select case-law and publications of the Court was signed in Madrid. This agreement will contribute to the overall promotion of human rights in Europe and in the Spanish-speaking world. Other States using non-official languages have been informed of this agreement, which, it is hoped, may serve as a model for future partnerships of this kind.

Given the interest in the Court's case-law on other continents, the Court has also joined forces with other sectors of the Council of Europe to accompany reforms in Southern Mediterranean partner countries, as part of the Council of Europe's policy towards neighbouring regions. Hence, the [South Programme II](#) (2015-2017)⁶ has contributed funding for translating select leading cases into Arabic.

As part of this programme for 2018 and 2019, the Court's legal summaries in leading case-law and publications in select areas (such as gender-based violence, human trafficking, asylum and migration, non-discrimination, social rights, data protection and children's rights in

3. 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.

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. Some forty translations were pending at the end of 2017 (see the complete list online under [Case-law/Case-law analysis](#)). 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.

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

cooperation with the Council of Europe's HELP programme) will thus be translated into Arabic.

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 Information Note is initially published as a provisional version containing summaries in the language (either English or French) of the judgment and subsequently in two final monolingual versions (one in English and the other in French).

The complete set of Information Notes and annual indexes are available on the Court's website ([Case-law/Case-law analysis/Case-law Information Note](#)), while individual legal summaries can be found in the HUDOC database. These legal summaries are published on the day of the delivery of the judgment or decision and quickly translated into the other official language. Translations into non-official languages are also available in some cases.

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 two new case-law guides covering Article 1 (obligation to respect human rights) and Article 8 of the Convention (right

to respect for private and family life) and further guides are foreseen for 2018.

The Directorate has put in place a new system for updating case-law guides on a more regular basis. Eight guides covering substantive Convention rights were updated in 2017, namely the guides on Article 4 (prohibition of slavery and forced labour), Article 6 (right to a fair trial (civil limb)), Article 7 (no punishment without law), Article 15 (derogation in time of emergency), Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (right to education), Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 (right to free elections), Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 (prohibition of collective expulsions of aliens) and Article 4 of Protocol No. 7 (right not to be tried or punished twice).

The Directorate also updated its research report on cultural rights and 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

Updates of the *Handbook on European non-discrimination law* and *Handbook on European data protection law* are being prepared and will be launched in the first half of 2018.

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

Training videos

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), the Court's website currently hosts three videos in the *COURTalks-disCOURs* series: on the admissibility criteria, on asylum and on terrorism.

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

7%

HUDOC visits

18%

translations

58%

Twitter followers



HELP. All the videos with their transcripts have been published online in over ten languages ([Case-law/Case-law analysis/COURTalks-disCOURs](#)).

Factsheets and Country Profiles

In 2017 the Press Unit prepared five new Factsheets on the Court's case-law concerning, in particular, access to the Internet, loss of nationality, migrant children, gestational surrogacy and lawyers' professional privilege. More than 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 can be viewed on, and downloaded from, 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 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.

17,727

visitors

466

visitor groups

49

training sessions

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

In 2017 the Visitors' Unit organised forty-nine training sessions lasting between

one and three days for legal professionals from eighteen of the forty-seven member States.

Some twenty HUDOC training sessions were organised in 2017 for judges and prosecutors of the member States of the Council of Europe. Further sessions were also organised for, among others, representatives of the Court's Superior Courts Network; judges from the French Court of Cassation; judges and prosecutors participating in the European Judicial Training Network; and representatives of the ECHR Unit of the National Academy of Prosecutors of Ukraine and the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine.

The Court has also increased its cooperation with other sectors of the Council of Europe and, in particular, in so far as training and case-law dissemination are concerned, with the HELP programme, with which it has explored ways of reinforcing the Courts' case-law outreach by participating in the launches of various training courses organised by HELP in member State institutions such as Bar associations, judicial councils and public prosecutors' offices. It has also made assistant lawyers from the Registry available as tutors on training courses where their experience and knowledge of Convention matters is seen as providing real and much appreciated added value.

Finally, the Registry has increasingly engaged with legal professionals and law students by offering tailored video-conference presentations and question-and-answer sessions to Bar associations, judicial training centres and law schools in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, 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 6,623,216 visits in 2017 (an increase of more than 10% compared with 2016). 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 multilingual Twitter account (twitter.com/echrpublica-tion) – which provides updates on the latest publications, translations and other case-law information tools, as well as important events

NEW

[Spanish HUDOC interface](#)

[Case-law guide on Article 1](#)

[Case-law guide on Article 8](#)

at the Court such as the launch of new HUDOC interfaces – had some 12,600 followers by the end of 2017. 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 web pages, which, though specialised in human rights law, also have 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 231,200 times in 2017.

Public-relations materials

The new film on the Court, explaining how it works and the issues it has to deal with, and showing the extent of its activity through a sample of cases, has been produced in various languages. It is currently available in twenty-six languages on the [Court’s YouTube channel](#).

On the website, the [Applicants](#) pages have been revamped to make it easier for would-be applicants to find the information they need. The information, which is available in the official languages of the Council of Europe member States, has been regularly updated and supplemented with new translations. Some documents are thus available in forty-one languages.

A new series of documents has been launched to raise public awareness of the impact of the Convention system in the various member States. The first publications, “[The ECHR and the Czech Republic in facts and figures](#)”, and “[The ECHR and Denmark in facts and figures](#)”, were produced when the States concerned held the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. Similar studies will be published for all other member States.

The “[Overview 1959-2016](#)” and “[The ECHR in facts and figures 2016](#)” have been updated and present a more general overview of the Court’s statistics.

Visits

In 2017 the Visitors’ Unit organised 466 information visits for a total of 13,134 members of the legal community. In all, it welcomed a total of 17,727 visitors in 2017.

