



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

Judicial Seminar 2017

Opening address of the President Guido Raimondi

27 January 2017

**Dear guests,
Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,**

It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you today for the events organised to mark the opening of the judicial year of the European Court of Human Rights.

I see so many familiar faces in the room that today's event almost has the feel of a very extensive family reunion.

A joyful reunion, I should specify, that we can enjoy from beginning to end.

It never fails to impress me to see such a large gathering of the senior judiciary from virtually every State in Europe.

By your presence, you show the close and strong ties that bind all of the judicial actors in the Convention system.

This nexus is a vital one for making a concrete reality of human rights in all our States, and across our continent.

Human rights as our common cause - that is the enduring motto of this Court.

Promoting that cause, and deepening its shared nature, is the fundamental aim of seminar each year, whatever the exact subject-matter may be.

Along with our national interlocutors, we also have with us representatives of other international courts with whom our contact and dialogue is of great importance too:

- the Court of Justice and the General Court of the European Union;
- the International Criminal Court;
- the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia;
- and the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals.

This year our subject-matter is extremely topical.

It will take the discussions into an area of extraordinary challenges for States, for the European institutions, and of course for the global institutions too.

All of these perspectives will figure in the interventions that will be heard this afternoon.

You will know that in the past year this Court has devoted close attention to aspects of *non-refoulement*, with a number of important judgments given by the Grand Chamber.

It has been a very rich year, one may say, in jurisprudential terms.

And so I believe that the theme of the seminar was very well-chosen – the scene is set for an excellent exchange of ideas and experience on this subject.

I will leave it to my colleague Judge Ganna Yudkivska, who has chaired the Organising Committee, to formally introduce the seminar in a moment, and to present this afternoon's speakers.

Let me simply express my great gratitude to them all for their willingness to take up the challenge of leading us into our discussions today.

And my thanks go as well to Ganna and the other members of the organising team for all of the work that has gone into the preparation of this year's event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time to begin our seminar, so I shall cede the floor to the Chair.

I shall follow the discussions with great interest.

And I look forward to seeing all of our guests in the hearing room later on for the more formal part of today's proceedings.

Thank you.