Last updated: July 2026

Estonia

Ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in 1996

National Judge: Peeter Roosma (6 January 2020 -)
Judges' CVs are available on the ECHR Internet site

Previous Judges: Uno Lõhmus (1994-1998), Rait Maruste (1998-2010), Julia Laffranque (2011-2019)

List of judges of the Court since 1959

The Court dealt with 101 applications concerning Estonia in 2025, of which 96 were declared inadmissible or struck out. It delivered 3 judgments (concerning 5 applications), 1 of which found at least one violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Applications processed in	2024	2025	2026*
Applications allocated to a judicial formation	97	104	74
Communicated to the Government	3	7	5
Applications decided:	106	101	40
- Declared inadmissible or struck out (Single Judge)	98	94	32
- Declared inadmissible or struck out (Committee)	7	1	2
- Declared inadmissible or struck out (Chamber)	1	1	0
- Decided by judgment	0	5	6

* January to July 2026

For information about the Court's judicial formations and procedure, see the ECHR internet site.
Statistics on interim measures can be found here.

Applications pending before the court on 01/07/2026	
Applications pending before a judicial formation:	64
Single Judge	47
Committee (3 Judges)	5
Chamber (7 Judges)	12
Grand Chamber (17 Judges)	0

Estonia and ...

The Registry

The task of the Registry is to provide legal and administrative support to the Court in the exercise of its judicial functions. It is composed of lawyers, administrative and technical staff and translators. There are currently **673** Registry staff members.

Noteworthy cases, judgments delivered

Grand Chamber

Vainik and Others v. Estonia (applications nos. 17982/21, 43852/21 and 44600/21)

30.06.2026

The case concerned the total ban on tobacco in Estonian prisons from October 2017. The three applicants in the case, prisoners at the time, complained that they could not smoke, which had led to them suffering from withdrawal symptoms.

The Court considered that it was no longer necessary to examine Mr Vainik's application as he had died and no heirs had come forward. The other two applicants were no longer affected by the ban because they had since been released and had, in any event, failed to respond to the Court's attempts to contact them.

The Court decided to strike the applications out of its list of cases.

Delfi AS v. Estonia

16.06.2015

This was the first case in which the Court had been called upon to examine a complaint about liability for user-generated comments on an Internet news portal. The applicant company, which runs a news portal run on a commercial basis, complained that it had been held liable by the national courts for the offensive comments posted by its readers below one of its online news articles about a ferry company. At the request of the lawyers of the owner of the ferry company, the applicant company removed the offensive comments about six weeks after their publication.

The Court held that there had been no violation of Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the Convention, finding that the Estonian courts' finding of liability against the applicant company had been a justified and proportionate restriction on the portal's freedom of expression, in particular, because: the comments in question had been extreme and had been posted in reaction to an article published by the applicant on its professionally managed news portal run on a commercial basis; the steps taken by the applicant to remove the offensive comments without delay after their publication had been insufficient; and the 320 euro fine had by no means been excessive for the applicant, one of the largest Internet portals in Estonia.

Panel of the Grand Chamber

Advisory opinion requested under Protocol No. 16 to the Convention by Estonia

European Court declines Estonian request for an advisory opinion on discontinuance orders by prosecutors

19.02.2024

The European Court of Human Rights has declined a request (no. P16-2023-002) for an advisory opinion submitted by a panel of the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Estonia. The decision is final.

That court asked the European Court of Human Rights to provide an advisory opinion on an issue arising in a case pending before it, an appeal by a mayor convicted of embezzlement and wilful breach of the public procurement rules. He argued that as the latter charge had been discontinued by a prosecutor at the pre-trial stage of the proceedings, that should count as a final acquittal.

The requesting court wanted to know whether a prosecutor's decision to discontinue criminal proceedings could constitute an acquittal within the meaning of Article 4 § 1 of Protocol No. 7 (right not to be tried or punished twice) to the European Convention on Human Rights and, if so, whether such a decision could be considered final, given that, as happened in this case, it could be revoked by a higher-ranking prosecutor.

The European Court ruled that the request did not raise a "question of principle" as required by Protocol No. 16, i.e., a novel and/or complex question, since the particular issue was the subject of well-established case-law. As shown by a succinct overview of that case-law, the discontinuance of criminal proceedings by a public prosecutor amounted to neither a conviction nor an acquittal, and Article 4 of Protocol No. 7 was therefore not applicable in such a situation.

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Protocol No. 16 enables member States' highest national courts and tribunals to ask the Court to give advisory opinions on questions of principle relating to the interpretation or application of the rights and freedoms defined in the Convention or its Protocols. Advisory opinions are not binding. Since Protocol No. 16 came into force on 1 August 2018, the Court has received nine requests for advisory opinions. It has accepted seven and refused two (including the present request). Currently 22 High Contracting Parties have signed and ratified Protocol No. 16 to the Convention.
For more information see What is a request for an advisory opinion?

Chamber

Cases on right to life (Article 2)

Rõigas v. Estonia

12.09.2017
The case essentially concerned Ms Rõigas's complaint of a lack of investigation into her son's alleged maltreatment in hospital and into the circumstances of his death.
No violation of Article 2

Cases dealing with prohibition of inhuman and/or degrading treatment (Article 3)

Detention cases

Tali v. Estonia

13.02.2014
The case concerned a detainee's complaint about having been ill-treated by prison officers when he refused to comply with their orders. In particular, pepper spray was used against him and he was strapped to a restraint bed.
Violation of Article 3

Korobov and Others v. Estonia

28.03.2013
The case concerned the applicants' alleged ill-treatment and detention during riots in Tallinn in April 2007 following protests against the relocation of a monument commemorating the entry of the Soviet Red Army into Tallinn during the Second World War.
Violation of Article 3 (ill-treatment) – in respect of the fifth applicant;
No violation of Article 3 (ill-treatment) – in respect of the first, fourth and seventh applicants;
Violation of Article 3 (investigation) – in respect of the first, fourth, fifth and seventh applicants.
The Court declared inadmissible the complaints of the other three applicants.

Julin v. Estonia

29.05.2012
Concerned multiple complaints about prison conditions, treatment by prison officials (strip search, confinement in restraint bed) and access to court.
Violation of Article 3 (on account of the applicant's confinement to restraint bed)
No violation of Article 3 (on account of the use of force and handcuffs)
No violation of Article 3 (investigation)
No violation of Article 6 § 1 (access to a court in connection with the complaint concerning detention conditions)
Violation of Article 6 § 1 (access to a court in connection with the complaint concerning the strip search)

Kochetkov v. Estonia

02.07.2009
Concerned conditions – notably overcrowding – of pre-trial detention in Narva Arrest House.
Violation of Articles 3 and Article 13 (right to an effective remedy)

Right to liberty and security cases (Article 5)

Detention cases

Malkov v. Estonia

04.02.2010
Concerned excessive length of pre-trial detention of a man accused of murder.
Violation of Article 5 § 3

Mikolenko v. Estonia

08.10.2009
Concerned detention of a Russian national, following the authorities' refusal to extend his residence permit, for 3 years and 11 months in a deportation centre pending his expulsion.
Violation of Article 5 § 1

Harkmann v. Estonia

11.07.2006
Defendant in criminal proceedings – evasion of court proceedings – complained

that he was not brought before a judge immediately after his arrest and, only released 15 days' later, was unable to obtain any compensation for his unlawful detention
Violation of Article 5 §§ 3 and 5

Sulaoja v. Estonia

15.02.2005
Concerned excessive length of the applicant's detention on remand and the failure to examine speedily his applications for release.
Violation of Article 5 §§ 3 and 4

Cases dealing with Article 6

Right to a fair trial

Shuvalov v. Estonia

29.05.2012
Concerned the complaint by a judge, accused of taking a bribe, that the prosecution's statements about his case breached his right to be presumed innocent.
No violation of Article 6 §§ 1 and 2 (unfairness and presumption of innocence)

Dorozhko and Pozharskiy v. Estonia

24.04.2008
Concerned the applicants' allegation that, in criminal proceedings against them, the trial judge had not been impartial as her husband had been involved in the pre-trial investigation of their case.
Violation of Article 6 § 1

Pello v. Estonia

12.04.2007
Mr Pello complained that, in criminal proceedings against him on charges of causing serious bodily injury, he had not had the opportunity to examine two witnesses, whose questioning would have led to his acquittal.
Article 6 § 1 and § 3 (d) (right to obtain attendance and examination of witnesses).

Taal v. Estonia

22.11.2005
Mr Taal complained that his conviction and sentencing to imprisonment for having threatened, using public phones, to explode a bomb in a supermarket, was based on statements of witnesses whom he had not had the opportunity to question at any stage of the proceedings and who were never actually heard by the courts.
Article 6 § 1 and § 3 (d) (right to obtain attendance and examination of witnesses).

Cases on Article 7 (no punish without law)

Liivik v. Estonia

25.06.2009
The case concerned former acting director general of the Estonian Privatisation Agency who was convicted of abuse of office in a privatisation agreement involving Estonian Railways.
Violation of Article 7

Cases concerning private and family life (Article 8)

Vainik and Others v. Estonia

04.11.2025 (not yet final)
The case concerned the total ban on smoking in prisons in Estonia from October 2017. The four applicants in the case, prisoners at the time, complained both about the ban itself and the withdrawal symptoms they had had.
Violation of Article 8

I.V. v. Estonia (no. 37031/21)

10.10.2023
The case concerned a father's attempt to contest the adoption of his biological son by another man in Estonia, against the background of paternity proceedings in Latvia.
Violation of Article 8

Liblik and Others v. Estonia

28.05.2019
The case concerned the retrospective justification of orders authorising secret surveillance during criminal proceedings against the applicants. It also concerned the length of those criminal proceedings.
Violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private life and correspondence) in respect of the second and the third applicant and the applicant companies
No violation of Article 6 § 1 (right to a fair trial within a reasonable time)

Sõro v. Estonia

03.09.2015

The case concerned Mr Sõro's complaint about the fact that information about his employment during the Soviet era as a driver for the Committee for State Security of the USSR (the KGB) had been published in the Estonian State Gazette in 2004.

Violation of Article 8

Cases dealing with freedom of expression (Article 10)

Kalda v. Estonia

19.01.2016

The case concerned a prisoner's complaint about the authorities' refusal to grant him access to three Internet websites, containing legal information, run by the State and by the Council of Europe. Mr Kalda, the applicant, complained in particular that the ban under Estonian law on his accessing these specific websites had breached his right to receive information via the Internet and prevented him from carrying out legal research for court proceedings in which he was engaged.

Violation of Article 10

Tammer v. Estonia

06.02.2001

Concerned a journalist's conviction for using insulting words in an article about the wife of Edgar Savisaar, former Prime Minister of Estonia.

No violation of Article 10

Cases concerning property rights (Article 1 of Protocol No. 1)

Tarkoev and Others v. Estonia

04.11.2010

The case concerned a complaint by a group of former Russian (Soviet) army servicemen living in Estonia about not being able to receive a pension from the Estonian authorities unless they gave up the pension paid to them by the Russian Federation.

No violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) in conjunction with Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (protection of property)

Cases concerning the right to free elections (Article 3 of Protocol No. 1)

Kalda v. Estonia (no. 2) (no. 14581/20)

06.12.2022

The case concerned the blanket ban on prisoners' voting in Estonia. As a result of the ban, the applicant, a prisoner serving a life sentence for various serious crimes, had been prevented from voting in the 2019 European Parliament Elections.

No violation of Article 3 of Protocol No. 1

Noteworthy cases, decisions delivered

M.L. and L.R. v. Estonia (no. 13420/12)

04.06.2012 (inadmissibility decision)

Concerned a mother and her two-year-old daughter whose father sought to be returned to Italy under the Hague Convention.

The Court found that Estonian court's decision ordering the return of the child to Italy had not been arbitrary.

Application declared inadmissible as manifestly ill founded.

Noteworthy pending cases

Chamber/Committee

Pühtitsa Jumalaema Uinumise Stavropigiaalne Naisklooster v. Estonia (37303/24) and Moskva Patriarhaadi EEsti Õigeusu Kirik v. Estonia (nos. 37303/24 and 37448/24)

The applicants are Pühtitsa Stavropegial Women's Monastery of the Dormition of Our Lady and the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. Both belong to the canonical structure of the Russian Orthodox Church. They complain about a political statement made by the Riigikogu (the Estonian Parliament) about the Moscow Patriarchate in May 2024, which they allege was derogatory, false and unsubstantiated, and violated their Convention rights.

Case notified to the Government on 20/06/2025.

Šabad v. Estonia (no. 24391/24)
The case concerns antisemitic speech. During a public meeting entitled "In support of Palestine" in Tallinn on 15 February 2024, the organiser made reference to various antisemitic narratives. The applicant, who identifies as a member of Jewish community, was at the meeting and subsequently lodged a report of criminal offence. The Police and Border Guard board refused to initiate offence proceedings. The applicant complains that the authorities tolerated antisemitic speech and failed to take positive steps to counter it by way of police action during the meeting and/or through subsequent criminal proceedings.
Case notified to the Government on 20/06/2025.

Mutso v. Estonia (no. 37626/23)
The case concerns the question of whether the applicant was properly informed of her right to remain silent and not to self-incriminate before revealing the usernames and passwords of her electronic devices during a criminal investigation against her. She was subsequently convicted, with the national court relying partly on information obtained from her mobile phone, from her e-mail and social media accounts and from messaging applications. She complains that she was not properly informed of her right to remain silent and not to self-incriminate.
Case notified to the Government on 23/10/2024.

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