



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

## **European Court of Human Rights**

# **Operational Rules of the Superior Courts Network**

**5 June 2026**

Further to the official launch of the Superior Courts Network (“the Network”) on 5 October 2015 in Strasbourg;

Taking note of the Network’s Cooperation Charter setting out the general principles for the management and development of the Network;

Taking into account the respective resources of the European Court of Human Rights (“the European Court”) and of the member and observer courts within the Network (hereinafter “Network courts”);

Building on the lessons learned from the Network’s first ten years of activity, the Operational Rules have been amended as follows:<sup>1</sup>

## **I. Members**

1. Superior courts in a Council of Europe member State may request membership in the Network by addressing a letter to the President of the European Court.

## **II. Observers**

2. International and other courts may request or be invited to join the Network as observers.

## **III. Focal Points**

3. Each Network court shall designate a person to act as its Focal Point with an account allowing access to the secured website. Such access may be extended to supplemental account holders of each court who will be bound by the same rules. Courts from the same State may appoint a single Focal Point to represent them.

4. The European Court shall designate a Focal Point for each Network court.

5. Focal Points must be proficient in at least one of the European Court’s two official languages and shall preferably communicate via the secured website.

6. Focal Points shall be responsible for circulating, within their respective courts, any information, knowledge or know-how received through Network activities.

7. Focal Points shall meet annually under the auspices of the European Court.

## **IV. Principal activities**

8. The Network shall function primarily at an operational level. With a view to ensuring effective exchanges, the European Court and Network courts shall provide relevant information and respond to requests for information made by the European Court and Network courts respectively.

9. Network exchanges may extend to sharing knowledge and know-how and take the form of study visits and training.

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<sup>1</sup> This version replaces both the Operational Rules for member courts (last revised on 22 March 2023) and the hitherto separate Rules for observer courts.

### **A. Information shared by the European Court**

10. The Jurisconsult shall provide information on law and practice under the European Convention on Human Rights as well as on related matters via the secured website. Such information shall be drafted in one of the two official languages of the European Court.

### **B. Formal information requests to the European Court**

11. Network courts may formally request the Jurisconsult for information supplementing the material already shared on the secured website. Such requests must be limited to questions concerning the European Court's case-law or practice, to which the Jurisconsult will respond with a list of cases without analysis or commentary.

12. Formal requests shall be made in one of the two official languages. To ensure their efficient management, they shall be produced using templates and shall consist of concise, numbered questions. Where necessary, they shall be accompanied by brief factual information to assist the understanding of the request.

13. The responses shall not be binding on the European Court in the context of its judicial activities and shall be the sole responsibility of the Jurisconsult. Responses shall be drafted in one of the two official languages.

14. No formal request shall be made concerning a case currently pending before the European Court.

### **C. Comparative-law requests to Network courts**

15. The European Court attaches considerable importance to Network courts' contributions to its comparative-law research. Requests to this effect shall be transmitted to Network courts by the Jurisconsult. Where more than one court from the same State is a member, the courts concerned shall decide which one of them shall submit the response or whether to submit a joint contribution.

16. No request may be sent to the courts of the State against which the case giving rise to the European Court's comparative study has been brought.

17. Each contribution from a Network court shall be the sole responsibility of the department producing it and shall not be binding on the court concerned in the context of its judicial activities.

18. Contributions shall be submitted in one of the two official languages of the European Court, except for any appended domestic-law instruments.

19. Contributions shall be submitted to the European Court on an exclusively bilateral basis. The Jurisconsult will provide the Network with a compilation of contributions once the case giving rise to the comparative study has become final.

## **V. Dissemination of information**

### **A. Dissemination within the Network**

20. Information reserved for the Network shall be disseminated via the secured website.

21. Network courts may share information with other courts and request information from each other by using the collaborative space on the secured website. Responses to such requests shall be provided on a voluntary basis and not normally involve any moderation or assistance by the European Court.

22. By using the collaborative space Network courts undertake to respect the European Court's disclaimer as well as any rules regarding possible moderation.

#### **B. Dissemination outside the Network**

23. Focal Points shall be the custodians of any documents disseminated within the Network and shall take any appropriate action to safeguard the interests of the court from which a document originates.

24. Before any European Court documents are disseminated beyond the Network the information therein must undergo additional processing in accordance with the precautionary principle, as described in the relevant guidelines.

25. Documents which a Network court has produced and shared within the Network requires the originating court's consent to any external dissemination, unless the document is publicly available.

#### **VI. Implementing guidelines**

26. These Rules may be supplemented by guidelines, as deemed appropriate.