



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

Superior Courts Network Annual Forum

4-5 June 2026

Opening of the Forum

Speech by Mattias Guyomar

Strasbourg, 4 June 2026

Dear Secretary of State Vuelta Simon,

Dear Ambassador Revel

Dear Judges,

Dear Registrar Tsirli,

Dear Director-General of Human Rights Esposito,

Dear Jurisconsult Austin,

Dear participants, both those in the room and those on-line,

On behalf of the Court, a warm welcome to you all at this 9th edition of the Annual Forum of the Superior Courts Network.

I wish to thank the Monaco Presidency for the generous help in funding this year's Forum.

Let me also thank the Court's Vice-President, Judge Kateřina Šimáčková, for chairing this morning's session, and our Jurisconsult, Anna Austin, as well as her team for all their work behind the scenes.

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The Superior Courts Network is 11 years old this year and it is impressive how it has grown since its inception.

Earlier this year, we welcomed our newest member – the Supreme Administrative Court of Austria.

I feel a personal attachment to the Network as I too was the SCN focal point for the *Conseil d'État* involved in the creation of the Network at its inception but from the domestic point of view.

After 11 years of developing this precious tool, initially designed to give the principle of subsidiarity a practical dimension, the time has come to invest more in a new chapter that will focus on expanding the second circle of participants – the observer courts.

I have just returned from an official mission to Brazil. The National High Court of Brazil as well as the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil – represented today by Mr André Wollman – have recently joined our Network as observers.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

While in Brazil, I met with the President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, Winston Anderson, who recently paid a visit in Strasbourg and was received by Vice-President Arnfinn Bårdsen.

This week, President Anderson informed me that the Caribbean Court of Justice would be joining our Network as an observer.

Also in Brazil, I spoke to the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa, Mahube Betty Molemela, and she expressed the interest in her court becoming an observer court next year.

This is all excellent news. Currently, altogether, we stand at 112 members from within the Council of Europe legal space, and 8 observer courts from other parts of the world.

That's 120 top jurisdictions united around the same goal of sharing knowledge.

Last year alone, the Court received over 260 contributions from member courts, in response to six requests. And since the creation of the Network, nearly 2,300 comparative-law contributions were received.

We are also united around the goal of nourishing judicial dialogue.

Judicial dialogue that continues to be a priority for our Court.

In recent months, delegations of our Court have visited many of you - the Supreme and Constitutional Courts in Portugal, Moldova, Romania, Spain and Ukraine, to name but a few.

We have also received visits from many of you: the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, the Supreme Courts of Estonia and Albania, and superior court judges from the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain and North Macedonia.

Next week, I will take part in the annual meeting of the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Courts of the European Union.

These contacts, and our meeting today, are a practical expression of our shared responsibility for applying the Convention, within a system where our Court plays a subsidiary supervision role while domestic courts are at the forefront.

They are also an opportunity to develop our working relationships and strengthen the personal ties that unite us.

At a time when judicial unity and solidarity is most needed, these personal ties are even more important.

I believe that judicial solidarity must be our answer to attacks on judicial independence.

Some of you may recall that I spoke about this at the opening of our judicial year.¹ I have spoken about this in many other fora, most recently in Brasília.

I believe in judicial unity because I believe deeply in human relationships, and in the human dimension of justice (*'dimension humaine de l'oeuvre de justice'*²).

Justice is a human experience, and that is why those who deliver it must meet, talk, and find common ground with the public, always in full respect for the diversity of our cultures and legal traditions.

At the International Congress in Brazil, where many European superior courts were represented, I clearly felt the mutual need to develop ties between courts from Europe and those from other parts of the world.³

This is because the problems we face are very often the same.

¹ [Speech by President Mattias Guyomar](#), Opening of the Judicial Year 2026

² Guyomar, M., 'La Convention en partage', in: "[The Superior Courts Network - A community of practice in the service of justice](#)", European Court of Human Rights (2025)

³ [International Congress on the Rule of Law and Judicial Ethics, National High Court of Brazil - ECHR - ECHR / CEDH](#)

This is also a way in which we can anchor our Convention system more strongly at the global level.

This is really what the Network is about.

Knowledge sharing.

But also, personal links.

For a human justice.

2

Today and tomorrow, our focus will be on the theme selected for this year, Business and Human Rights.

A defining feature of the Convention is that it places the State at the very heart of the system, being ultimately responsible for the effective respect of human rights, under the supervision of the Court.

But private actors, and this includes businesses, have a substantial presence in the Court's case-law.

The Court has dealt with numerous cases concerning business: cases brought by businesses complaining of regulations; and cases concerning the State's positive obligations to regulate business activities where they may have affected the rights of individuals.

These cases dealt with various issues under different provisions of the Convention, including Articles 8, 10 and 11, which protect the right to private life, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, as well as Article 1 of Protocol No. 1, which protects the right to property.

Last year, for example, the Court has protected corporate rights by defending Google's freedom of expression, in the context of excessive fines imposed on it by the Russian authorities for failure to remove political-opposition and war-reporting content from YouTube.⁴

It also protected corporate rights in another case decided last year, *Amerisoc Center S.R.L. v. Luxembourg* (2025), which concerned the seizure of a company's funds following an international request for assistance.⁵

At the same time, the Court has protected individuals from the consequences of the abusive action of businesses.

For example, in the Grand Chamber judgment *Halet v. Luxembourg [GC]* (2023), the Court protected a whistle-blower who disclosed confidential documents exposing tax practices of multinational companies.⁶

It also protected local populations from industrial pollution and illegal waste disposal, as in last year's two judgments against Italy – *Cannavacciuolo & Others* (2025), and *L.F. and Others* (2025).⁷

The Court has also defended the public interest, for instance in the case *UAB Profarma and UAB Bona Diagnosis v. Lithuania* (2025) that concerned the purchase of COVID tests. In that case, the Court found bad faith on part of businesses which had sought to take advantage of the public-health emergency in order to make excessive profit, at the expense of the public purse.⁸

The Court's case-law on the theme of business is an excellent example of the Convention being a 'living instrument', interpreted by a Court in light of conditions of the present day.

By both safeguarding corporate rights and ensuring corporate compliance with human rights, the Court fulfils its ambition of being a Court for everyone – a Court for all.

⁴ [Google LLC and Others v. Russia](#) (2025)

⁵ [Amerisoc Center S.R.L. v. Luxembourg](#) (2025)

⁶ [Halet v. Luxembourg](#) [GC] (2023)

⁷ [L.F. and Others v. Italy](#) (2025) and [Cannavacciuolo & Others v. Italy](#) (2025)

⁸ [UAB Profarma and UAB Bona Diagnosis v. Lithuania](#) (2025)

A Court that, as shown by *Greenpeace Nordic and Others v. Norway* (2025), a recent case concerning oil exploration licences, protects the human rights of the present generation while taking into account the interests of the future ones.⁹

In response to the growing relevance of Business and Human Rights, the Court's Jurisconsult has prepared useful new tools on this theme, which we hope will be of help to you in your work.¹⁰

We have also modified the Network's Cooperation Charter and are setting up a platform that will enable your courts to exchange information online directly and securely at horizontal level.

I had been advocating this, as this it will really enrich the fabric of the network.

The Registrar, Marialena Tsirli, will give you more detail about this.

3

When we say that 'all roads lead to Rome', we mean that the same outcome can be reached by many ways.

I see this an excellent metaphor for the principle of subsidiarity.

Judicial dialogue is a two-way street, and all streets converge on the Convention – which was adopted in Rome.

And our Network is where these streets meet.

Rich with 120 legal perspectives that add legitimacy to our respective judicial work.

"A community of practice in the service of justice"¹¹ that brings us together and makes us proud.

I wish you all a day of fruitful discussions, and I hope to join you later. Thank you.

⁹ [Greenpeace Nordic and Others v. Norway](#) (2025)

¹⁰ [Guide on Business and Human rights](#)

¹¹ [The Superior Courts Network - A community of practice in the service of justice](#). European Court of Human Rights (2025)