



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

COURT (CHAMBER)

CASE OF PRAMSTALLER v. AUSTRIA

(Application no. 16713/90)

JUDGMENT

STRASBOURG

23 October 1995

In the case of Pramstaller v. Austria ¹,

The European Court of Human Rights, sitting, in accordance with Article 43 (art. 43) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ("the Convention") and the relevant provisions of Rules of Court A ², as a Chamber composed of the following judges:

Mr R. RYSSDAL, *President*,

Mr F. MATSCHER,

Mr L.-E. PETTITI,

Mr R. MACDONALD,

Mr S.K. MARTENS,

Mr I. FOIGHEL,

Mr J.M. MORENILLA,

Sir John FREELAND,

Mr J. MAKARCZYK,

and also of Mr H. PETZOLD, *Registrar*,

Having deliberated in private on 28 April and 28 September 1995,

Delivers the following judgment, which was adopted on the last-mentioned date:

PROCEDURE

1. The case was referred to the Court by the European Commission of Human Rights ("the Commission") on 9 September 1994, within the three-month period laid down by Article 32 para. 1 and Article 47 (art. 32-1, art. 47) of the Convention. It originated in an application (no. 16713/90) against the Republic of Austria lodged with the Commission under Article 25 (art. 25) by an Austrian national, Mr Johann Pramstaller, on 18 May 1990.

The Commission's request referred to Articles 44 and 48 (art. 44, art. 48) and to the declaration whereby Austria recognised the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court (Article 46) (art. 46). The object of the request was to obtain a decision as to whether the facts of the case disclosed a breach by

¹ The case is numbered 35/1994/482/564. The first number is the case's position on the list of cases referred to the Court in the relevant year (second number). The last two numbers indicate the case's position on the list of cases referred to the Court since its creation and on the list of the corresponding originating applications to the Commission.

² Rules A apply to all cases referred to the Court before the entry into force of Protocol No. 9 (P9) and thereafter only to cases concerning States not bound by that Protocol (P9). They correspond to the Rules that came into force on 1 January 1983, as amended several times subsequently.

the respondent State of its obligations under Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) of the Convention.

2. In response to the enquiry made in accordance with Rule 33 para. 3 (d) of Rules of Court A, the applicant stated that he wished to take part in the proceedings and designated the lawyer who would represent him (Rule 30).

3. On 24 September 1994, the President of the Court decided, under Rule 21 para. 6 and in the interests of the proper administration of justice, that a single Chamber should be constituted to consider the instant case and the cases of Schmutzner, Umlauf, Gradinger, Palaoro and Pfarrmeier v. Austria³.

4. The Chamber to be constituted for this purpose included ex officio Mr F. Matscher, the elected judge of Austrian nationality (Article 43 of the Convention) (art. 43), and Mr R. Ryssdal, the President of the Court (Rule 21 para. 3 (b)). On the same day, in the presence of the Registrar, the President drew by lot the names of the other seven members, namely Mr L. E. Pettiti, Mr R. Macdonald, Mr S.K. Martens, Mr I. Foighel, Mr J.M. Morenilla, Sir John Freeland and Mr J. Makarczyk (Article 43 in fine of the Convention and Rule 21 para. 4) (art. 43).

5. As President of the Chamber (Rule 21 para. 5), Mr Ryssdal, acting through the Registrar, consulted the Agent of the Austrian Government ("the Government"), the applicant and the Delegate of the Commission on the organisation of the proceedings (Rules 37 para. 1 and 38). Pursuant to the order made in consequence, the Registrar received the Government's memorial on 24 January 1995 and the applicant's memorial on 30 January 1995.

6. On 3 February 1995 the Commission produced various documents in the proceedings before it, as requested by the Registrar on the President's instructions.

7. In accordance with the President's decision, the hearing took place in public in the Human Rights Building, Strasbourg, on 26 April 1995. The Court had held a preparatory meeting beforehand.

There appeared before the Court:

(a) for the Government

Mr F. CEDE, Ambassador, Head of the International
Law Department, Federal Ministry of
Foreign Affairs,

Agent,

Ms I. SIEß, Constitutional Department,
Federal Chancellery,

Ms E. BERTAGNOLI, International Law Department,
Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Advisers;

³ Cases nos. 31/1994/478/560, 32/1994/479/561, 33/1994/480/562, 36/1994/483/565 and 37/1994/484/566

(b) for the Commission

Mr A. WEITZEL,

Delegate;

(c) for the applicant

Mr W.L. WEH, Rechtsanwalt,

Counsel.

The Court heard addresses by Mr Weitzel, Mr Weh and Mr Cede.

AS TO THE FACTS

I. CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE

8. Mr Johann Pramstaller lives at Debant, near Lienz.

9. On 17 March 1987 Nußdorf-Debant municipal council granted Mr Pramstaller planning permission for the construction of new commercial premises, subject to various detailed conditions: two groceries should be built, each with appropriate commercial and sanitary amenities and separate entrances; and a dividing wall was to be erected between the two shops.

At a later stage the applicant informed the council that he was envisaging opening a supermarket on the premises, whereupon the council drew his attention to the specifications in the planning permission, which allowed only for two different smaller shops to be built, with separate entrances and divided by a party wall. They further warned the applicant that failure to comply with these specifications would result in the works being immediately halted.

10. On 23 July 1987 the council ordered the applicant to suspend the works. An inspection of the site had shown that, contrary to the terms of the planning permission, only one larger shop was being built instead of the two smaller ones. The applicant had thus disregarded several conditions of the planning permission.

11. On 10 November 1987 the Lienz district authority (Bezirkshauptmannschaft) served a "sentence order" (Straferkenntnis) on the applicant pursuant to sections 53(1)(a) and 53(2) of the Tyrol Building Regulations Act (Tiroler Bauordnung - see paragraph 15 below). According to the order, it had been established that the applicant had not only failed to erect the party wall as well as certain amenities, but had also opened an additional entrance, considerably enlarged the premises, built an additional wall and created one large shop instead of the two smaller ones originally planned. In so doing, the applicant had carried out works without planning permission.

Mr Pramstaller was ordered to pay a fine of 50,000 Austrian schillings (ATS) with fifty days' imprisonment in default of payment, plus costs. An appeal by him to the Tyrol regional government (Amt der Landesregierung)

was dismissed on 22 March 1988 on the ground, among others, that the works carried out by the applicant not only failed to comply with the permission granted but were in part illegal.

12. Mr Pramstaller then applied to the Constitutional Court (Verfassungsgerichtshof), alleging, inter alia, a violation of Article 6 (art. 6) of the Convention in that he had not been able to bring his case, or have an oral hearing held, before a tribunal which conformed with that provision (art. 6). On 16 September 1988 the Constitutional Court declined to accept the case for adjudication under Article 144 para. 2 of the Federal Constitution (Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz - see paragraph 18 below) as raising questions concerning the application of ordinary law (einfaches Gesetz); in so far as the complaint did raise issues of constitutional law, the Constitutional Court found that the application did not have sufficient prospects of success.

13. The applicant then requested to have his case transferred to the Administrative Court (Verwaltungsgerichtshof), with which grounds of appeal against the administrative authorities' decision were subsequently lodged.

14. On 14 September 1989 the applicant's appeal was dismissed by the Administrative Court pursuant to section 42(1) of the Administrative Court Act (Verwaltungsgerichtshofsgesetz - see paragraph 22 below). With regard to the complaints concerning Article 6 (art. 6) of the Convention, the court pointed out that the Administrative Criminal Justice Act (Verwaltungsstrafgesetz) did not confer a general right to a hearing before the administrative authorities. Only in special circumstances was a hearing to be held.

The Administrative Court then dealt with the remaining complaints as follows:

"The applicant further submitted that the impugned decision dealt only with the obligation, noted in the decision at first instance, to obtain permission not to erect the dividing wall, and not with the obligation to obtain permission for the other - in his view minimal - failures to comply with the plan. But as, he maintained, the question whether these other failures to comply with the plan might lead to the applicant's being punished was of importance if the failure to erect the wall was not punishable, the reasoning was inadequate. This submission is inaccurate, because the respondent authority did in fact, as it was entitled to do, take it for granted that planning permission was necessary for all the measures mentioned in the original decision. The major building works undertaken by the applicant were, as the file shows, not covered by permission from the planning authorities. There was also clearly a consistent intention to go ahead and build in disregard of the planning regulations. The applicant further overlooks that, quite apart from the principle that planning permission was necessary for such a building project, permission could never have been given for a shopping centre such as was built in the instant case, having regard to the provision in section 16(b) of the Tyrol Town and Country Planning Act, which was declared constitutional by the Constitutional Court in a decision (B 816/86) of 2 March 1988.

During the planning-application proceedings Mr Pramstaller acted as the applicant for planning permission and as the owner of the land and the building on it. The [Z.] firm put itself forward as the future user of the building. The applicant never disputed during the administrative criminal proceedings that he was the person for whom the building was being constructed and that he was thus liable in administrative criminal law. His submission that the dividing wall was not built not on his orders but on those of the [Z.] firm that was using the commercial premises can therefore not exonerate him as he bore the responsibility for accepting and carrying out the orders of the future occupier. The suggestion set out for the first time in the statement of facts in the supplementary application that the building was being constructed for another firm is a new submission that is inadmissible in administrative proceedings by virtue of section 41(1) of the Administrative Court Act.

It was further submitted that the suspension of the building works that had been ordered had made it impossible to erect the dividing wall, although this could have been done without substantial expenditure even after the building work had stopped, so that there had been no negligence.

This submission likewise cannot assist the applicant. As the evidence and the applicant's submission clearly show, there had been no intention to build the dividing wall even before building work was suspended; on the contrary, the applicant deliberately refrained from doing so in order to secure a review of section 16(b) of the Tyrol Town and Country Planning Act by the Constitutional Court. Furthermore, at the time when the building works were suspended, there were other important failures to comply with the planning permission for which approval would have been needed (see in the statement of facts the details of the findings made by the authority on 6 July 1987 during an inspection of the works). The subsequent suspension of building work is accordingly of no legal significance in the present context.

The respondent authority also rightly noted that the very fact of the repeatedly expressed intention not to erect the dividing wall and to maintain the building in issue in a state that did not comply with the planning permission and for which no approval had been given showed that there had been culpable intent. Similarly, as the respondent authority rightly recognised, the theoretical possibility that the Constitutional Court might declare section 16(b) of the Tyrol Town and Country Planning Act unconstitutional cannot be prayed in aid as a mitigating circumstance. Contrary to the applicant's submissions, this purpose could have been achieved other than through failing to comply with the planning permission by not erecting the dividing wall and carrying out unauthorised works. It was open to the applicant at the outset to make an application for planning permission to build large-scale commercial premises, a shopping centre, and in this way challenge section 16(b) of the Tyrol Town and Country Planning Act in the Constitutional Court. The submission on this point therefore fails.

As to the submission that, contrary to what was stated in the impugned decision, the authority (municipal council) had agreed to the dividing wall not being built after a report had been made by a fire-safety expert, the applicant is referred to the evidence given by the chairman of the municipal council and to the note for the file made by him on the day of the meeting, from which it is quite clear that there was disagreement between the participants over the question whether authorisation was needed not to build the dividing wall and that the applicant was expressly warned by the municipal council that under section 31 of the Tyrol Building Regulations Act read together with section 16(b) of the Tyrol Town and Country Planning Act, a building scheme that

was altered in this way could not be authorised. The applicant is mistaken in suggesting that the statement made by the legal representative of the [Z.] firm, who was also present at the meeting, constitutes a ground for excluding his guilt. From the observations filed by counsel for the applicant on the evidence given by the chairman of the municipal council it appears that the whole question of suspending the building works and the issue of the constitutionality of section 16(b) of the Tyrol Town and Country Planning Act were discussed and the possibility of challenging that provision in the Constitutional Court envisaged. The municipal council was allegedly made aware of this 'outcome of the negotiations'. The applicant himself, however, states in his application that there was disagreement among those taking part in the discussions as to the question of the need for authorisation not to build the dividing wall, with the municipal council assuming that such authorisation was necessary whereas the representative of the [Z.] firm assumed it was sufficient merely to report the fact. The applicant thus himself admits that, contrary to later statements in the application and in the observations on the evidence given by the chairman of the municipal council, no agreement was reached between the municipal council and the applicant, so that the assumption that there was a ground here for excluding the applicant's guilt is invalid on this ground alone. Nor can the Administrative Court find that the respondent authority committed any significant procedural irregularities in this respect in the reasons given for the impugned decision. The submission on this point is accordingly unfounded.

The respondent authority dealt at length and accurately with the grounds for the assessment of punishment and with the assessment of punishment in general, so that it cannot be criticised in this respect either.

..."

II. RELEVANT DOMESTIC LAW AND PRACTICE

A. Legislation on building

15. Section 53(1)(a) of the Tyrol Building Regulations Act (Tiroler Landesbauordnung) 1978 provides:

"It shall be an administrative offence (Verwaltungsübertretung)

(a) to carry out without planning permission a building project that requires planning permission ..."

Section 53(2) provides:

"The administrative offences set out in paragraph 1 shall be punishable with a fine not exceeding ATS 100,000 or with imprisonment for up to three months ..."

16. Section 25 of the same Act provides:

"The authorities' permission is required in the following cases:

(a) new building, extensions and conversions; and

(b) alterations to buildings or parts of buildings in so far as they affect the building's structural soundness, its safety in the event of fire, its plumbing or its external aspect ..."

B. Procedure

17. Article 90 para. 1 of the Federal Constitution (Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz) provides:

"Hearings by trial courts in civil and criminal cases shall be oral and public. Exceptions may be prescribed by law."

1. Proceedings in the Constitutional Court

18. By Article 144 para. 1 of the Federal Constitution, the Constitutional Court, when an application (Beschwerde) is made to it, has to determine whether an administrative decision (Bescheid) has infringed a right guaranteed by the Constitution or has applied regulations (Verordnung) contrary to the law, a law contrary to the Constitution or an international treaty incompatible with Austrian law.

Article 144 para. 2 provides:

"Up to the time of the hearing the Constitutional Court may by means of a decision (Beschuß) decline to accept a case for adjudication if it does not have sufficient prospects of success or if it cannot be expected that the judgment will clarify an issue of constitutional law. The court may not decline to accept for adjudication a case excluded from the jurisdiction of the Administrative Court by Article 133."

2. Proceedings in the Administrative Court

19. By Article 130 para. 1 of the Federal Constitution, the Administrative Court has jurisdiction to hear, inter alia, applications alleging that an administrative decision is unlawful.

20. Section 39(1) of the Administrative Court Act provides that at the end of the preliminary proceedings (Vorverfahren) the Administrative Court must hold a hearing where the applicant makes a request to that effect.

Section 39(2) reads as follows:

"Notwithstanding a party's application under subsection (1), the Administrative Court may decide not to hold a hearing where

1. the proceedings must be stayed (section 33) or the application dismissed (section 34);
2. the impugned decision must be quashed as unlawful because the respondent authority lacked jurisdiction (section 42(2)(2));
3. the impugned decision must be quashed as unlawful on account of a breach of procedural rules (section 42(2)(3));

4. the impugned decision must be quashed because its content is unlawful according to the established case-law of the Administrative Court;
5. neither the respondent authority nor any other party before the court has filed pleadings in reply and the impugned decision is to be quashed;
6. it is apparent to the court from the pleadings of the parties to the proceedings before it and from the files relating to the earlier administrative proceedings that a hearing is not likely to clarify the case further."

Sub-paragraphs 1 to 3 of section 39(2) were in force in 1958; sub-paragraphs 4 and 5 were inserted in 1964 and sub-paragraph 6 in 1982.

21. Section 41(1) of the Administrative Court Act provides:

"In so far as the Administrative Court does not find any unlawfulness deriving from the respondent authority's lack of jurisdiction or from breaches of procedural rules (section 42(2)(2) and (3)) ..., it must examine the impugned decision on the basis of the facts found by the respondent authority and with reference to the complaints put forward ... If it considers that reasons which have not yet been notified to one of the parties might be decisive for ruling on [one of these complaints] ..., it must hear the parties on this point and adjourn the proceedings if necessary."

22. Section 42(1) of the same Act states that, save as otherwise provided, the Administrative Court must either dismiss an application as ill-founded or quash the impugned decision.

By section 42(2):

"The Administrative Court shall quash the impugned decision if it is unlawful

1. by reason of its content, [or]
2. because the respondent authority lacked jurisdiction, [or]
3. on account of a breach of procedural rules, in that

(a) the respondent authority has made findings of fact which are, in an important respect, contradicted by the case file, or

(b) the facts require further investigation on an important point, or

(c) procedural rules have been disregarded, compliance with which could have led to a different decision by the respondent authority."

23. If the Administrative Court quashes the impugned decision, "the administrative authorities [are] under a duty ... to take immediate steps, using the legal means available to them, to bring about in the specific case the legal situation which corresponds to the Administrative Court's view of the law (Rechtsanschauung)" (section 63(1)).

24. In a judgment of 14 October 1987 (G 181/86) the Constitutional Court held:

"From the fact that it has been necessary to extend the reservation in respect of Article 5 (art. 5) of the Convention to cover the procedural safeguards of Article 6

(art. 6) of the Convention, because of the connection between those two provisions (art. 5, art. 6), it follows that, conversely, the limited review (die (bloß) nachprüfende Kontrolle) carried out by the Administrative Court or the Constitutional Court is insufficient in respect of criminal penalties within the meaning of the Convention that are not covered by the reservation."

3. The "independent administrative tribunals"

25. Pursuant to Article 129 of the Federal Constitution, administrative courts called "independent administrative tribunals" (Unabhängige Verwaltungssenate) were set up in the Länder with effect from 1 January 1991. The functions of these tribunals include determining both the factual and the legal issues arising in cases concerning administrative offences (Verwaltungsübertretungen).

III. AUSTRIA'S RESERVATION IN RESPECT OF ARTICLE 5 (ART. 5) OF THE CONVENTION

26. The instrument of ratification of the Convention deposited by the Austrian Government on 3 September 1958 contains, inter alia, a reservation worded as follows:

"The provisions of Article 5 (art. 5) of the Convention shall be so applied that there shall be no interference with the measures for the deprivation of liberty prescribed in the laws on administrative procedure, BGBl [Federal Official Gazette] No. 172/1950, subject to review by the Administrative Court or the Constitutional Court as provided for in the Austrian Federal Constitution."

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COMMISSION

27. Mr Pramstaller applied to the Commission on 18 May 1990. He relied on Article 6 paras. 1, 2 and 3 (art. 6-1, art. 6-2, art. 6-3) of the Convention, complaining (a) that he had been unable to bring his case before a tribunal for the determination of a criminal charge against him and (b) that he had not had a fair trial in that the burden of proof had been on him, the accused.

28. On 10 May 1993 the Commission declared the application (no. 16713/90) admissible in so far as it concerned the complaint that the applicant had not been able to bring his case before a tribunal within the meaning of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) of the Convention.

In its report of 19 May 1994 (Article 31) (art. 31), it expressed the unanimous opinion that there had been a violation of that provision (art. 6 1). It further expressed the opinion that the lack of hearing in the Administrative Court raised no separate issue. The full text of the

Commission's opinion and of the concurring opinion contained in the report is reproduced as an annex to this judgment ⁴.

FINAL SUBMISSIONS TO THE COURT BY THE GOVERNMENT

29. In their memorial the Government asked the Court to hold that

"Article 6 (art. 6) of the Convention is not applicable in the present case; or alternatively, that Article 6 (art. 6) of the Convention was not violated in the administrative criminal proceedings underlying the application".

AS TO THE LAW

I. ALLEGED VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 6 PARA. 1 (art. 6-1) OF THE CONVENTION

30. The applicant complained of a violation of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) of the Convention, which provides:

"In the determination of ... any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing ... by an independent and impartial tribunal ..."

He had, he maintained, been denied the right to a "tribunal" and to a hearing before such a body.

A. Applicability of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1)

1. Whether there was a "criminal charge"

31. In Mr Pramstaller's submission, the administrative criminal offence of which he was accused gave rise to a "criminal charge". This was not disputed by the Government.

32. In order to determine whether an offence qualifies as "criminal" for the purposes of the Convention, it is first necessary to ascertain whether or not the provision (art. 6-1) defining the offence belongs, in the legal system of the respondent State, to criminal law; next the "very nature of the offence" and the degree of severity of the penalty risked must be considered

⁴ Note by the Registrar: for practical reasons this annex will appear only with the printed version of the judgment (volume 329-A of Series A of the Publications of the Court), but a copy of the Commission's report is available from the registry.

(see, among other authorities, the *Öztürk v. Germany* judgment of 21 February 1984, Series A no. 73, p. 18, para. 50, and the *Demicoli v. Malta* judgment of 27 August 1991, Series A no. 210, pp. 15-17, paras. 31-34).

33. Like the Commission, the Court notes that, although the offences in issue and the procedures followed in the case fall within the administrative sphere, they are nevertheless criminal in nature. This is moreover reflected in the terminology employed. Thus Austrian law refers to administrative offences (*Verwaltungsstraftaten*) and administrative criminal procedure (*Verwaltungsstrafverfahren*). In addition, the fine imposed on the applicant was accompanied by an order for his committal to prison in the event of his defaulting on payment (see paragraph 15 above).

These considerations are sufficient to establish that the offence of which the applicant was accused may be classified as "criminal" for the purposes of the Convention. It follows that Article 6 (art. 6) applies.

2. Austria's reservation in respect of Article 5 (art. 5) of the Convention

34. According to the Government, the procedure in question was covered by Austria's reservation in respect of Article 5 (art. 5) of the Convention. There could be no doubt that by the reference in that reservation to "measures for the deprivation of liberty" the Austrian Government had meant to include proceedings resulting in such measures. Any other construction would not only lack coherence; it would also run counter to the authorities' intention, which had been to remove from the scope of the Convention the whole administrative system, including the substantive and procedural provisions of administrative criminal law. That would be so even in a case where, as in this instance, the accused was merely fined, in so far as default on payment of that fine would entail committal to prison.

Admittedly, the Tyrol Building Regulations Act 1978 was not one of the four laws designated in the reservation. However, one of those laws, the Administrative Criminal Justice Act, stated in section 10 that, except as otherwise provided, the general administrative laws were to determine the nature and severity of sanctions. It mattered little in this respect that section 53 of the Tyrol Building Regulations Act, which was applied in the present case, had been enacted after the reservation had been deposited, because that provision merely clarified the substance of an existing obligation laid down in the Tyrol Building Regulations Act 1901.

35. The applicant argued that the reservation could not apply in the present case. In the first place, it failed to satisfy the requirements of Article 64 (art. 64) of the Convention, which provides:

"1. Any State may, when signing [the] Convention or when depositing its instrument of ratification, make a reservation in respect of any particular provision of the Convention to the extent that any law then in force in its territory is not in

conformity with the provision. Reservations of a general character shall not be permitted under this Article (art. 64).

2. Any reservation made under this Article (art. 64) shall contain a brief statement of the law concerned."

Secondly, on a strict construction, its wording precluded extending its scope to the procedural sphere, which was in issue here.

36. The Court points out that in the *Chorherr v. Austria* judgment of 25 August 1993 it held that Austria's reservation in respect of Article 5 (art. 5) of the Convention was compatible with Article 64 (art. 64) (Series A no. 266-B, p. 35, para. 21). It therefore remains only to ascertain whether the provisions applied (art. 5, art. 64) in the present case are covered by that reservation. They differ in certain essential respects from those in issue in the *Chorherr* case.

The Court notes that Mr Pramstaller based his complaints on Article 6 (art. 6) of the Convention, whereas the wording of the reservation invoked by the Government mentions only Article 5 (art. 5) and makes express reference solely to measures for the deprivation of liberty. Moreover, the reservation only comes into play where both substantive and procedural provisions of one or more of the four specific laws indicated in it have been applied. Here, however, the substantive provisions of a different Act, the Tyrol Building Regulations Act 1978, were applied.

These considerations are a sufficient basis for concluding that the reservation in question does not apply in the instant case.

B. Compliance with Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1)

1. Access to a tribunal

37. Mr Pramstaller contended that none of the bodies that had dealt with his case in the proceedings in issue could be regarded as a "tribunal" within the meaning of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1). This was true not only of the administrative authorities, but also of the Constitutional Court, whose review was confined to constitutional issues, and above all of the Administrative Court. The latter was bound by the administrative authorities' findings of fact, except where there was a procedural defect within the meaning of section 42(2), sub-paragraph 3, of the Administrative Court Act (see paragraph 22 above). It was therefore not empowered to take evidence itself, or to establish the facts, or to take cognisance of new matters. Moreover, in the event of its quashing an administrative measure, it was not entitled to substitute its own decision for that of the authority concerned, but had always to remit the case to that authority. In short, its review was confined exclusively to questions of law and therefore could not be regarded as equivalent to that of a body with full jurisdiction.

38. The Government contested this view, whereas the Commission accepted it.

39. The Court reiterates that decisions taken by administrative authorities which do not themselves satisfy the requirements of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) of the Convention - as is the case in this instance with the district authority and the regional government (see paragraph 11 above) - must be subject to subsequent control by a "judicial body that has full jurisdiction" (see, *inter alia* and *mutatis mutandis*, the following judgments: *Albert and Le Compte v. Belgium* of 10 February 1983, Series A no. 58, p. 16, para. 29; *Öztürk*, previously cited, pp. 21-22, para. 56; and *Fischer v. Austria* of 26 April 1995, Series A no. 312, p. 17, para. 28).

40. The Constitutional Court is not such a body. In the present case it could look at the impugned proceedings only from the point of view of their conformity with the Constitution, and this did not enable it to examine all the relevant facts. It accordingly lacked the powers required under Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1).

41. The powers of the Administrative Court must be assessed in the light of the fact that the court in this case was sitting in proceedings that were of a criminal nature for the purposes of the Convention. It follows that when the compatibility of those powers with Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) is being gauged, regard must be had to the complaints raised in that court by the applicant as well as to the defining characteristics of a "judicial body that has full jurisdiction". These include the power to quash in all respects, on questions of fact and law, the decision of the body below. As the Administrative Court lacks that power, it cannot be regarded as a "tribunal" within the meaning of the Convention. Moreover, in a judgment of 14 October 1987 the Constitutional Court held that in respect of criminal penalties not covered by the reservation in respect of Article 5 (art. 5), the review carried out by the Administrative Court or the Constitutional Court was insufficient (see paragraph 24 above).

42. It follows that the applicant did not have access to a "tribunal". There has accordingly been a violation of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) on this point.

2. Lack of a hearing

43. Mr Pramstaller further criticised the Administrative Court for failing to hold a hearing.

44. Having regard to the conclusion in paragraph 42 above, the Court does not consider it necessary to examine this complaint.

II. APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 50 (art. 50) OF THE CONVENTION

45. Under Article 50 (art. 50) of the Convention,

"If the Court finds that a decision or a measure taken by a legal authority or any other authority of a High Contracting Party is completely or partially in conflict with the obligations arising from the ... Convention, and if the internal law of the said Party allows only partial reparation to be made for the consequences of this decision or measure, the decision of the Court shall, if necessary, afford just satisfaction to the injured party."

46. The Delegate of the Commission left the matter of just satisfaction to the discretion of the Court.

A. Damage

47. In respect of pecuniary damage, the applicant claimed repayment of the fine imposed on him, that is to say ATS 60,000. He also claimed ATS 20,000 for non-pecuniary damage.

48. The Government contended that the Court had no jurisdiction to quash convictions pronounced by national courts or to order repayment of fines. Moreover, it could not, in awarding reparation, speculate as to what the outcome of the proceedings would have been if the applicant had had access to a tribunal within the meaning of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) of the Convention.

49. The Court agrees. It cannot speculate as to what the outcome of the proceedings in issue might have been if the violation of the Convention had not occurred (see the *Hauschildt v. Denmark* judgment of 24 May 1989, Series A no. 154, p. 24, para. 57; the *Saïdi v. France* judgment of 20 September 1993, Series A no. 261-C, p. 58, para. 49; and the *Fischer* judgment, previously cited, p. 21, para. 47). It considers that, in the circumstances of the case, the present judgment affords the applicant sufficient reparation.

B. Costs and expenses

50. In addition, Mr Pramstaller claimed the sum of ATS 203,763 for the costs and expenses incurred in the proceedings first in the domestic courts and then before the Convention institutions.

51. The Government expressed the view that only the proceedings in the Administrative Court - which had given rise to the alleged violations - and those in Strasbourg could be taken into account. They also contested the quantum of the costs, but they were prepared to reimburse a total of ATS 300,000 in respect of the *Umlauf*, *Pramstaller*, *Palaoro* and *Pfarrmeier* cases, the applicants in all these cases having been represented by the same lawyer.

52. Making an assessment on an equitable basis, having regard to the information in its possession and its case-law, the Court awards Mr Pramstaller ATS 100,000.

FOR THESE REASONS, THE COURT UNANIMOUSLY

1. Holds that Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1) of the Convention applies in this case;
2. Holds that there has been a violation of that Article (art. 6-1) as regards access to a court;
3. Holds that it is not necessary to examine the complaint based on the lack of a hearing in the Administrative Court;
4. Holds that the respondent State is to pay the applicant, within three months, 100,000 (one hundred thousand) Austrian schillings in respect of costs and expenses;
5. Dismisses the remainder of the claim for just satisfaction.

Done in English and in French, and delivered at a public hearing in the Human Rights Building, Strasbourg, on 23 October 1995.

Rolv RYSSDAL
President

Herbert PETZOLD
Registrar

In accordance with Article 51 para. 2 (art. 51-2) of the Convention and Rule 53 para. 2 of Rules of Court A, the separate opinion of Mr Martens is annexed to this judgment.

R. R.
H. P.

SEPARATE OPINION OF JUDGE MARTENS

1. I concur in the Court's finding that Article 6 (art. 6) has been violated, but cannot agree with its reasoning.

2. My objections concern paragraph 41 of the judgment, which starts with the statement:

"The powers of the Administrative Court must be assessed in the light of the fact that the court in this case was sitting in proceedings that were of a criminal nature for the purposes of the Convention."

3. I will refrain from a structural criticism of this paragraph. I cannot help noting, however, that here again the Court finds it necessary to remark that when it is being assessed whether or not the Administrative Court is to be considered a court that affords the safeguards of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1), "regard must be had to the complaints raised in that court". One looks in vain, however, for evidence of this methodological principle being put into practice: there does not follow any analysis of what the applicant argued before the Administrative Court, nor is there any trace of "regard" to these arguments in the assessment of the adequacy of the Administrative Court's jurisdiction. For the rest, I refer to the methodological objections to this "test" that I raised in paragraph 18 of my separate opinion in the case of *Fischer v. Austria* (judgment of 26 April 1995, Series A no. 312).

4. My main objection to this paragraph is the following. In the three civil cases discussed in my aforementioned separate opinion, the Court found that the Austrian Administrative Court met the requirements of a tribunal within the meaning of Article 6 para. 1 (art. 6-1). In the paragraph under discussion, however, it reaches the opposite conclusion, stressing that in this case the Administrative Court was sitting in proceedings of a criminal nature. One cannot but infer that the Court is of the opinion that in a case which under national law is an "administrative" one but under the Convention is a "criminal" one, the safeguards afforded by the tribunal that is to review the final decision of the administrative bodies differ from those required in a case that under national law is an "administrative" one but under the Convention is a "civil" one. I cannot see any justification for such differentiation, which does not find support in the wording or the purpose of Article 6 (art. 6) ¹. Nor does the Court offer one, its decision on this crucial point being unsupported by any argument. This is the more to be regretted as this differentiation is contrary to the Court's case-law ².

¹ I refer in this context to footnote 62 of my aforementioned separate opinion in the case of *Fischer v. Austria*.

² See, inter alia, the *Le Compte, Van Leuven and De Meyere v. Belgium* judgment of 23 June 1981, Series A no. 43, pp. 23-24, para. 53; the *Albert and Le Compte v. Belgium* judgment of 10 February 1983, Series A no. 58, p. 17, para. 30; see also the *Diennet v. France* judgment of 26 September 1995, Series A no. 325-A, pp. 13-14, para. 28.