



Grand Chamber to examine case concerning alleged secret surveillance of Hungarian businessman

The Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights to which the case **Knopp v. Hungary** (application no. 22931/18) had been allocated has **relinquished jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber of the Court**¹.

The case concerns an 88-year-old Hungarian businessman who was under investigation in the United States of America (the USA) for alleged international racketeering. He fears that the Hungarian authorities, at the request of the US authorities, recorded his phone conversations and monitored his emails.

A legal summary of this case will be available in the Court's database HUDOC ([link](#))

Principal facts

The applicant, Andras Knopp, is a Hungarian national who was born in 1938 and lives in Moscow.

In 2010 and 2013, the US Department of Justice turned to the Hungarian Ministry of Justice with requests for Mutual Legal Assistance in a federal investigation against Mr Knopp for allegedly participating in international racketeering.

As a result, part of the information used by the US authorities in the criminal proceedings against Mr Knopp was apparently gathered by the Hungarian authorities through secret surveillance, in particular phone tapping.

Mr Knopp asked the Hungarian Ministry of Justice and the National Police Department to disclose what information was collected and retained, by whom and how and on what grounds, to no avail.

His request for judicial review in the ordinary courts, his claim to the *Kúria* (the Hungarian name for the Supreme Court) and complaint to the Constitutional Court were all unsuccessful.

Complaints and procedure

Relying on Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention of Human Rights, Mr Knopp complains about the alleged covert interception of his emails and tapping of his phone, as well as the absence of sufficient safeguards to prevent a risk of arbitrariness. He also complains of the Hungarian authorities' refusal to provide him with information on his personal data gathered by them through secret surveillance within the framework of the execution of the Mutual Legal Assistance requests by the US authorities.

The application was lodged with the European Court of Human Rights on 10 May 2018.

On 8 November 2019 the Hungarian Government was given [notice](#)² of the application, with questions from the Court.

¹ Under Article 30 of the European Convention of Human Rights "Where a case pending before a Chamber raises a serious question affecting the interpretation of the Convention or the Protocols thereto, or where the resolution of a question before the Chamber might have a result inconsistent with a judgment previously delivered by the Court, the Chamber may, at any time before it has rendered its judgment, relinquish jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber."

² In accordance with Rule 54 of the Rules of Court, a Chamber of seven judges or the President of the Section may decide to bring to the attention of a Convention State's Government that an application against that State is pending before the Court (the so-called "communications procedure"). Further information about the procedure after a case is communicated to a Government can be found in the Rules of Court.

The Chamber to which the case had been allocated relinquished jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber on 9 June 2026.

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The European Court of Human Rights was set up in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe member States in 1959 to deal with alleged violations of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights.