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

Press Release
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75th anniversary of the Council of Europe

The President of the European Court of Human Rights has made the following statement on the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe:

"75 years since the establishment of the Council of Europe in 1949, the founding States' reaffirmation in the Statute of "their devotion to the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples and the true source of individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy"[1] remains as important today for 46 States as it was then for 10.

The Statute requires Council of Europe members, then and now, to demonstrate respect for these values, on pain of expulsion in cases of serious violation.

One of the principal means for achieving greater unity and safeguarding the signatory States' common heritage was and is the European Convention on Human Rights and its innovative mechanism for the collective enforcement of individual rights.

Since the signature of the Convention just one year later, the European Court of Human Rights has dealt with over one million applications and handed down over 27,000 judgments. Those judgments have contributed, whether directly or indirectly, in the improvement of the democratic and social fabric of our societies, making them more inclusive, tolerant and genuinely democratic.

But the Court's defence of the Council of Europe's common heritage is not carried out in isolation.

We work in tandem with your national authorities and courts, who bear primary responsibility for upholding Convention values. Our judicial work also interacts with and is supported by the indefatigable work of the Council's various statutory and monitoring bodies, which work to tackle some of the most pressing issues of our time from gender-based violence (GREVIO), to corruption (GRECO), ill-treatment in places of detention (CPT), human trafficking (GRETA), racism (ECRI) and the protection of rule of law standards (the Venice Commission).

On this important anniversary, let us reflect on the vital role which this organisation must continue to play in maintaining high standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law across the 46 member States. Let us not shy away from any necessary reforms.

And at this critical point in history, when States are confronted by conflict, democratic erosion and unprecedented challenges, let us also not lose sight of our profound responsibility to pass on to future generations both the Council's values and the unique international protection mechanism which is the European Convention on Human Rights."

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[1] See the third recital of the Statute of the Council of Europe, ETC No. 001, London, 5 May 1949.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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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.