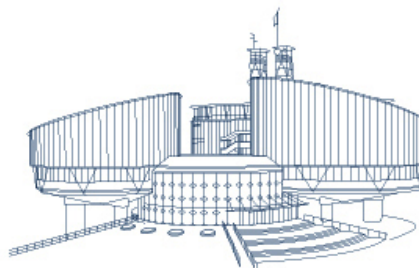


PRESS RELEASE

POSSIBILITY FOR THE EUROPEAN COURT TO REQUEST A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR A CHILD: AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF COURT

ECHR 235 (2026) 25.09.2026

Issued by the Registrar of the Court



On 7 September 2026 the European Court of Human Rights adopted amendments to the Rules of Court in respect of [Rules 36 and 44](#). These amendments will come into force on 25 March 2027.

The amendments concern the possibility to appoint, in certain special circumstances, an independent representative for a child applicant and, exceptionally, for a third party who is a child. The amendments do not affect the case-law on the representation of children, but make it possible to request the appointment of an independent representative.

The amendments were taken against the background of a consultation process with the Governments of the member States, Bar associations, non-governmental and other organisations.

New guidelines (a Practice Direction) on how the amendments are to be implemented (scope and modalities) are being prepared and will be issued by the President of the Court (Rule 32 of the Rules of Court) before the amendments come into force.

A new § 3bis has been inserted in Rule 36 – Representation of applicants:

“3bis. Once the application has been communicated in accordance with Rule 54 § 2 b), if special circumstances so warrant, with respect to children, the President of the Chamber may request the respondent Government or the Government of another Contracting Party concerned to ensure the appointment, by a court, another competent domestic authority or a Bar Association, and in accordance with the relevant domestic procedure, of an independent representative for the purposes of representing the applicant in the proceedings before the Court. The appointed representative shall have the authority to act on behalf of the applicant before the Court.”

The existing § 4(a) of Rule 36 has been amended as follows:

“4. (a) The representative acting on behalf of the applicant pursuant to paragraphs 2 to 3bis of this Rule shall be an advocate authorised to practise in any of the Contracting Parties and resident in the territory of one of them, or any other person approved by the President of the Chamber.”

A new § 3 (c) has been inserted in Rule 44 – Third-party intervention:

“3. (c). Exceptionally, with respect to children and in accordance with the procedure provided in Rule 36 § 3bis, the President of the Chamber may request the appointment of an independent representative for the purposes of representing an individual who has been invited or granted leave to intervene under Article 36 § 2 of the Convention.”

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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.