

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE - COUNCIL OF EUROPE

DIRECTION DE L'INFORMATION — DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION



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TOWARDS THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL PETITION

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms lays down (Article 25) that any person, non-governmental organization or group of individuals claiming to be the victim of a violation of the rights set forth in the Convention may lodge a complaint with the European Commission of Human Rights. However, for these provisions to take effect at least six signatory governments must explicitly declare that they recognize the competence of the Commission to receive such individual petitions. Furthermore, complaint may only be lodged against those signatories which have made such a declaration: in other cases, only the signatory Governments may refer an alleged breach of the Convention to the Commission.

On 29th March M. Jonasson, the Icelandic Member of the European Commission of Human Rights deposited with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe a declaration by his Government that it accepts the right of individual petition. The declaration will remain valid, in the first instance, for five years. Similar declarations have already been deposited by Sweden, Denmark and Ireland.

In Strasbourg it is considered that declarations by other Governments may be made in the course of 1955 and that, in consequence, the right of individual appeal in cases of violation of human rights may come into force this year.