



SUMMARIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TREATIES

The summaries available hereunder are designed to meet a practical need, that of supplying the public at large with concise descriptions of the Council of Europe treaties. The summaries are necessarily short and can therefore only give a first introduction to the main features of each treaty.

Subject-matter: **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 5](#)), open for signature, in Rome, on 4 November 1950.

Entry into force: 3 September 1953.

The "European Convention on Human Rights" sets forth a number of fundamental rights and freedoms (right to life, prohibition of torture, prohibition of slavery and forced labour, right to liberty and security, right to a fair trial, no punishment without law, right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, right to marry, right to an effective remedy, prohibition of discrimination). More rights are granted by additional protocols to the Convention (Protocols 1 (ETS No. 9), 4 (ETS No. 46), 6 (ETS No. 114), 7 (ETS No. 117), 12 (ETS No. 177), 13 (ETS No. 187), 14 (CETS No. 194), 15 (CETS No. 213) and 16 (CETS No. 214)).

Parties undertake to secure these rights and freedoms to everyone within their jurisdiction. The Convention also establishes an international enforcement machinery. To ensure the observance of the engagements undertaken by the Parties, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has been set up. It deals with individual and inter-State petitions. At the request of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Court may also give advisory opinions concerning the interpretation of the Conventions and the protocols thereto. The Committee of Ministers has also a power to ask the Court for an interpretation of a judgment.

The parties to a case must abide by the judgments of the Court and take all necessary measures to comply with them. The Committee of Ministers supervises the execution of judgments. The Secretary General may request Parties to provide explanations on the manner in which their domestic law ensures the effective implementation of the Convention.

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Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 9](#)), open for signature, in Paris, on 20 March 1952.

Entry into force: 18 May 1954.

The Additional Protocol to the Convention (ETS No. 5) adds new fundamental rights to those protected under the Convention, namely: the right to peaceful enjoyment of property, the right to education and the right to free elections by secret ballot.

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European Social Charter ([ETS No. 35](#)), open for signature, in Turin, on 18 October 1961.

Entry into force: 26 February 1965.

The European Social Charter of 1961 is the counterpart of the European Convention on Human Rights in the sphere of economic and social rights.

The Charter of 1961 guarantees the enjoyment, without discrimination, of fundamental social and economic rights defined in the framework of a social policy that Parties undertake to pursue, by all appropriate means (Part I).

Of the rights guaranteed by the Charter, the right to work, the right to organise, the right to bargain collectively, the right to social security, the right to social and medical assistance, the right to the social, legal and economic protection of the family, and the right to protection and assistance for migrant workers and their families are regarded as particularly significant (Part II).

Any State ratifying the Charter must undertake to be bound by at least 5 of Articles 1, 5, 6, 12, 13, 16 and 19, and by such a number of Articles or numbered paragraphs, provided that the total number of Articles or paragraphs is not less than 10 Articles or 45 numbered paragraphs of Part II of the Charter.

The European Social Charter sets up an international system of supervision of its application by the Parties based on national reports. Every year the Parties submit a report on some of the accepted provisions of the Charter indicating how they implement the Charter in law and in practice. The European Committee of Social Rights (former Committee of Independent Experts) examines the reports and decides whether or not the situations in the countries concerned are in conformity with the Charter. If a Party takes no action on a decision of non-conformity of the European Committee on Social Rights, the Committee of Ministers may address a recommendation to that Party, asking it to change the situation in law and in practice. The Committee of Ministers' work is prepared by a Governmental Committee comprising representatives of the governments of the Parties to the Charter, assisted by observers representing European employers' organisations and trade unions.

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Protocol No. 2 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, conferring upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions ([ETS No. 44](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 6 May 1963.

Entry into force: 21 September 1970.

Protocol No. 2 to the Convention confers upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions.

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Protocol No. 3 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention ([ETS No. 45](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 6 May 1963.

Entry into force: 21 September 1970.

This Protocol modifies Articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention (numbering in force prior to 1 November 1998).

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Protocol No. 4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, securing certain rights and freedoms other than those already included in the Convention and in the first Protocol thereto ([ETS No. 46](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 16 September 1963.

Entry into force: 2 May 1968.

This Protocol secures certain rights and fundamental freedoms not included in previous texts: no deprivation of liberty for non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose one's residence, prohibition of a State's expulsion of a national, prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens.

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Protocol No. 5 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention ([ETS No. 55](#)), open for, in Strasbourg, on 20 January 1966.

Entry into force: 20 December 1971.

This Protocol modifies Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention relating to the term of office of Members to be elected (*numbers in force prior to 1 November 1998*).

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European Agreement relating to Persons participating in Proceedings of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights ([ETS No. 67](#)), open for signature, in London, on 6 May 1969.

Entry into force: 17 April 1971.

The Agreement requires Parties to ensure that persons participating in proceedings instituted under the Convention on Human Rights (agents, advisors, advocates, applicants, delegates, witnesses and experts) enjoy immunity from legal process in respect of their acts before the Court and Commission, as well as freedom to correspond with those organs and freedom to travel for the purpose of attending the proceedings.

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Protocol No. 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty ([ETS No. 114](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 28 April 1983.

Entry into force: 1 March 1985.

The Sixth Protocol covers the abolition of the death penalty, notably in time of war.

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Protocol No. 7 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 117](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 22 November 1984.

Entry into force: 1 November 1988.

Protocol No. 7 extends the list of rights protected under the Convention and its Protocols Nos. 1, 4 and 6 to include the following:

- The right of aliens to procedural guarantees in the event of expulsion from the territory of a State;
- The right of a person convicted of a criminal offence to have the conviction or sentence reviewed by a higher tribunal;
- The right to compensation in the event of a miscarriage of justice;
- The right not to be tried or punished in criminal proceedings for an offence for which one has already been acquitted or convicted (*ne bis in idem*);
- Equality of rights and responsibilities as between spouses.

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Protocol No. 8 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 118](#)), open for signature, in Vienna, on 19 March 1985.

Entry into force: 1 January 1990.

This Protocol gives to the European Commission of Human Rights the possibility to set up Chambers, each composed of at least seven members to examine individual petitions which can be dealt with on the basis of established case law or which raise no serious question affecting the interpretation or application of the Convention.

This Protocol provides, too, that the Commission may set up committees, each composed of at least three members, with the power, exercisable by a unanimous vote, to declare inadmissible or strike from its list of cases a petition when such a decision can be taken without further examination.

These provisions do not apply to petitions from States.

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European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ([ETS No. 126](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 26 November 1987.

Entry into force: 1 February 1989.

The Convention provides for the setting up of an international committee empowered to visit all places where persons are deprived of their liberty by a public authority. The committee, composed of independent experts, may make recommendations and suggest improvements in order to strengthen, if necessary, the protection of persons visited from torture and from inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

This preventive, non-judicial machinery is an important addition to the system of protection already existing under the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5).

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Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter ([ETS No. 128](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 5 May 1988.

Entry into force: 4 September 1992.

The Additional Protocol of 1988 extends the social and economic rights guaranteed by the European Social Charter of 1961 by adding the following rights:

- the right for workers to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the ground of sex;
- the right for workers to be informed and consulted within the undertaking;
- the right for workers to take part in the determination and improvement of working conditions and the working environment in the undertaking;
- the right for elderly persons to social protection.

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Protocol No. 9 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 140](#)), open for signature, in Rome, on 6 November 1990.

Entry into force: 1 October 1994.

The Ninth Protocol affords an applicant the right to refer a case to the Court in certain circumstances.

Under Article 25 of the Convention, any person claiming to be the victim of a violation of human rights may make an application to the European Commission of Human Rights against the State responsible. If the Commission, having declared the application admissible, fails to secure a friendly settlement, it draws up a report on the facts stating its opinion as to whether there has been a breach of the Convention. Under the original Convention scheme, only the Commission and States concerned can refer cases to the Court, provided that the State against which the complaint has been lodged has recognised the jurisdiction of the Court. This Protocol enables an applicant whose petition has been the subject of a report by the Commission to request the Court to deal with the case, regardless of whether the Commission or the State concerned have referred the case to the Court.

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Protocol amending the European Social Charter ([ETS No. 142](#)), open for signature, in Turin, on 21 October 1991.

Entry into force: The Protocol will enter into force after its ratification by all the Parties to the Charter (ETS No. 35).

The Amending Protocol of 1991 improves considerably the control machinery of the Charter.

The Protocol confirms the political role of the Committee of Ministers and of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It clarifies the respective functions of two principal organs of control, – i.e. the European Committee of Social Rights (restricted body composed of independent persons, which decides whether or not the situations in the countries concerned are in conformity with the Charter in law and in practice) and the Governmental Committee (body composed of representatives of each of the Parties, which prepares the Committee of Ministers' work) –, and reinforced the participation of social partners and non-governmental organisations.

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Protocol No. 10 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 146](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 25 March 1992.

Entry into force: *This Protocol is closed to legal acts since the entry into force of Protocol No. 11 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 155), on 1 November 1998.*

The Tenth Protocol aims at improving the Convention's supervision procedures. It changes the rule on the majority required when the Committee of Ministers is called upon to vote on whether the Convention has been violated in cases not referred to the European Court of Human Rights.

It replaces the two-thirds majority provided for in Article 32 of the Convention by a simple majority of member States.

When the new Protocol enters into force, the Committee of Ministers will take decisions relating to its judicial functions under Article 32 of the Convention by simple majority.

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European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ([ETS No. 148](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 5 November 1992.

Entry into force: 1 March 1998.

This treaty aims to protect and promote the historical regional or minority languages of Europe. It was adopted, on the one hand, in order to maintain and to develop the Europe's cultural traditions and heritage, and on the other, to respect an inalienable and commonly recognised right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life.

First, it enunciates objectives and principles that Parties undertake to apply to all the regional or minority languages spoken within their territory: respect for the geographical area of each language; the need for promotion; the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages in speech and writing, in public and private life (by appropriate measures of teaching and study, by transnational exchanges for languages used in identical or similar form in other States).

Further, the Charter sets out a number of specific measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life. These measures cover the following fields: education, justice, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social activities and transfrontier exchanges. Each Party undertakes to apply a minimum of thirty-five paragraphs or sub-paragraphs chosen from among these measures, including a number of compulsory measures chosen from a "hard core". Moreover, each Party has to specify in its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, each regional or minority language, or official language which is less widely used in the whole or part of its territory, to which the paragraphs chosen shall apply.

Enforcement of the Charter is under control of a committee of experts which periodically examines reports presented by the Parties.

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Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ([ETS No. 151](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 4 November 1993.

Entry into force: 1 March 2002.

The first Protocol "opens" the Convention by providing that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe may invite any non-member State to accede to it.

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Protocol No. 2 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ([ETS No. 152](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 4 November 1993.

Entry into force: 1 March 2002.

Protocol No. 2 introduces amendments of a technical nature. Provision is made for members of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) to be placed in one of two groups for election purposes, the aim being to ensure that one half of the Committee's membership is renewed every two years. The Protocol also provides that members of the CPT may be re-elected twice, instead of only once as at present.

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Protocol No. 11 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, restructuring the control machinery established thereby ([ETS No. 155](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 11 May 1994.

Entry into force: 1 November 1998.

Protocol No. 11 aims to rationalise the machinery for enforcement of rights and liberties guaranteed by the Convention. All alleged violations of the rights of persons are referred directly to the new permanent Court. In the majority of cases, the Court will sit in Chambers of seven judges. The Court deals with individual and inter-State petitions.

Manifestly ill-founded cases may be declared inadmissible by unanimous vote of a committee of three judges. If the Court declares the application admissible, it will pursue the examination of the case, together with the representatives of the parties, and if need be will undertake an investigation. It will also place itself at the disposal of the parties with a view to securing a friendly settlement of the matter on the basis of respect for human rights as defined in the Convention and the protocols thereto.

Within a period of three months from the date of the judgment of the Chamber, any party to the case may, in exceptional cases (serious questions affecting the interpretation or application of the Convention or the protocols thereto, or serious issues of general importance), request that the case be referred to the Grand Chamber. If the request is accepted, the resulting judgment of the Grand Chamber will be final. Otherwise, judgments of Chambers will become final when the parties declare that they will not request that the case be referred to the Grand Chamber, or have made no request for reference three months after the date of the judgment; or, if such a request is made, when the panel of the Grand Chamber rejects the request to refer.

The Committee of Ministers is no longer empowered to deal with the merits of cases, although it maintains its important role of ensuring that governments comply with the Court's judgments.

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Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ([ETS No. 157](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 1 February 1995.

Entry into force: 1 February 1998.

The Convention is the first legally binding multilateral instrument concerned with the protection of national minorities in general. Its aim is to protect the existence of national minorities within the respective territories of

the Parties. The Convention seeks to promote the full and effective equality of national minorities by creating appropriate conditions enabling them to preserve and develop their culture and to retain their identity.

The Convention sets out principles relating to persons belonging to national minorities in the sphere of public life, such as freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and access to the media, as well as in the sphere of freedoms relating to language, education, transfrontier co-operation, etc.

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Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints ([ETS No. 158](#)), open to signature, in Strasbourg, on 9 November 1995.

Entry into force: 1 July 1998.

The Additional Protocol providing a system of collective complaints of 1995 is one of measures designated to improve the effective enforcement of the social rights guaranteed by the Charter.

The Protocol entitles social partners and non-governmental organisations to lodge collective complaints of violations of the Charter in States which have ratified it. The complaint is examined by the European Committee of Social Rights which declares it admissible if the formal requirements have been met. The Committee then takes a decision on the merits of the complaint, which it forwards to the parties concerned and to the Committee of Ministers in a report, which is made public within four months of its being forwarded.

On the basis of the report of the European Committee of Social Rights, the Committee of Ministers adopts a resolution. If appropriate, it may recommend that the State concerned take specific measures to bring the situation into line with the Charter.

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European Agreement relating to persons participating in proceedings of the European Court of Human Rights ([ETS No. 161](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 5 March 1996.

Entry into force: 1 January 1999.

The Agreement requires Parties to ensure that persons participating in proceedings instituted under the European Convention on Human Rights, as amended by Protocol No. 11, (agents, advisors, advocates, applicants, delegates, witnesses, and experts) enjoy immunity from legal process in respect of their acts before the single permanent Court, as well as freedom to correspond with the Court and freedom to travel for the purpose of attending the proceedings.

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European Social Charter (revised) ([ETS No. 163](#)), open to signature, in Strasbourg, on 3 May 1996.

Entry into force: 1 July 1999.

The European Social Charter (revised) of 1996 embodies in one instrument all rights guaranteed by the Charter of 1961, its additional Protocol of 1988 (ETS No. 128) and adds new rights and amendments adopted by the Parties. It is gradually replacing the initial 1961 treaty.

The European Social Charter (revised) guaranteed fundamental social and economic rights of all individuals in their daily lives. It takes account of the evolution which has occurred in Europe since the Charter was adopted in 1961, and includes the following:

New rights: right to protection against poverty and social exclusion; right to housing; right to protection in cases of termination of employment; right to protection against sexual harassment in the workplace and other forms of harassment; rights of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment; rights of workers' representatives in undertakings.

Amendments: reinforcement of principle of non-discrimination; improvement of gender equality in all fields covered by the treaty; better protection of maternity and social protection of mothers; better social, legal and economic protection of employed children; better protection of handicapped people.

Enforcement of the new Charter is submitted to the same system of control as the Charter of 1961, developed by the Amending Protocol of 1991 (ETS No. 142) and by the Additional Protocol of 1995 providing a system of collective complaints (ETS No. 158).

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Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([ETS No. 177](#)), open for signature, in Rome, on 4 November 2000.

Entry into force: 1 April 2005.

Protocol No. 12 provides for a general prohibition of discrimination. The current non-discrimination provision of the European Convention on Human Rights is of a limited kind because it only prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of one or the other rights guaranteed by the Convention (*Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination : "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status."*).

The Protocol removes this limitation and guarantees that no-one shall be discriminated against on any ground by any public authority.

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Protocol No. 13 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances ([ETS No. 187](#)), open for signature, in Vilnius, on 3 May 2002.

Entry into force: 1 July 2003.

This Protocol is banning the death penalty in all circumstances, including for crimes committed in times of war and imminent threat of war.

No derogation or reservation is allowed to Protocol No. 13.

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Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems ([ETS No. 189](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 28 January 2003.

Entry into force: 1 March 2006.

This Protocol entails an extension of the Cybercrime Convention's scope, including its substantive, procedural and international cooperation provisions, so as to cover also offences of racist or xenophobic propaganda. Thus, apart from harmonising the substantive law elements of such behaviour, the Protocol aims at improving the ability of the Parties to make use of the means and avenues of international cooperation set out in the Convention (ETS No. 185) in this area.

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Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention ([CETS No. 194](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 13 May 2004.

Entry into force: 1 June 2010.

This Protocol aims to make the changes such as the introduction of a new admissibility criterion, the treatment of repetitive cases or clearly inadmissible cases, for a more satisfactory operation of the European Court of Human Rights.

Under the Protocol the Committee of Ministers will be empowered, if it decides by a two-thirds majority to do so, to bring proceedings before the Court where a State refuses to comply with a judgment. The Committee of Ministers will also have a new power to ask the Court for an interpretation of a judgment. This is to assist the

Committee of Ministers in its task of supervising the execution of judgments and particularly in determining what measures may be necessary to comply with a judgment.

Other measures in the Protocol include changing the judges' term of office to a single, nine year term, and a provision allowing the accession by the European Union to the Convention.

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Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ([CETS No. 197](#)), open for signature, in Warsaw, on 16 May 2005.

Entry into force: 1 February 2008.

The Convention is a comprehensive treaty mainly focused on the protection of victims of trafficking and the safeguard of their rights. It also aims at preventing trafficking as well as prosecuting traffickers.

The Convention applies to all forms of trafficking; whether national or transnational, whether or not related to organised crime and whoever the victim, women, men or children and whatever the form of exploitation, sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, etc.

The Convention provides for the setting up of an independent monitoring mechanism ("GRETA") guaranteeing Parties' compliance with its provisions.

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Protocol No. 14bis to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([CETS No. 204](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 27 May 2009.

Entry into force: 1 October 2009.

Protocol No. 14bis allowed, pending the entry into force of Protocol No. 14, the application of two procedural elements of Protocol No. 14 with respect to those States that expressed their consent:

- a single judge will be able to reject manifestly inadmissible applications.
- the competence of three-judge committees is extended to declare applications admissible and decide on their merits where there already was a well-established case law of the Court.

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Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents ([CETS No. 205](#)), open for signature, in Tromsø, on 18 June 2009.

Entry into force: 1 December 2020.

This Convention is the first binding international legal instrument to recognise a general right of access to official documents held by public authorities. Transparency of public authorities is a key feature of good governance and an indicator of whether or not a society is genuinely democratic and pluralist. The right of access to official documents is also essential to the self-development of people and to the exercise of fundamental human rights. It also strengthens public authorities' legitimacy in the eyes of the public, and its confidence in them.

This Convention lays down a right of access to official documents. Limitations on this right are only permitted in order to protect certain interests like national security, defense or privacy.

The Convention sets forth the minimum standards to be applied in the processing of requests for access to official documents (forms of and charges for access to official documents), review procedure and complementary measures and it has the flexibility required to allow national laws to build on this foundation and provide even greater access to official documents.

A Group of Specialists on Access to Official Documents will monitor the implementation of this Convention by the Parties.

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Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ([CETS No. 210](#)), open for signature, in Istanbul, on 11 May 2011.

Entry into force: 1 August 2014.

This new landmark treaty of the Council of Europe opens the path for creating a legal framework at pan-European level to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence.

The Convention also establishes a specific monitoring mechanism ("GREVIO") in order to ensure effective implementation of its provisions by the Parties.

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Protocol No. 15 amending the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([CETS No. 213](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 24 June 2013.

Entry into force: 1 August 2021.

To maintain the effectiveness of the European Court of Human Rights, this Protocol makes the following changes to the Convention:

- Adding a reference to the principle of subsidiarity and the doctrine of the margin of appreciation to the Preamble of the Convention;
- Shortening from six to four months the time limit within which an application must be made to the Court;
- Amending the 'significant disadvantage' admissibility criterion to remove the second safeguard preventing rejection of an application that has not been duly considered by a domestic tribunal;
- Removing the right of the parties to a case to object to relinquishment of jurisdiction over it by a Chamber in favour of the Grand Chamber;
- Replacing the upper age limit for judges by a requirement that candidates for the post of judge be less than 65 years of age at the date by which the list of candidates has been requested by the Parliamentary Assembly.

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Protocol No. 16 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([CETS No. 214](#)), open for signature, in Strasbourg, on 2 October 2013.

Entry into force: 1 August 2018.

Protocol No. 16 allows the highest courts and tribunals of a High Contracting Party, as specified by the latter, to request the European Court of Human Rights to give advisory opinions on questions of principle relating to the interpretation or application of the rights and freedoms defined in the Convention or the Protocols thereto.

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Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer ([CETS No. 226](#)), open for signature, in Luxembourg, on 13 May 2025.

Entry into force: The Convention will enter into force following eight ratifications, including at least six member States of the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer covers lawyers and their professional associations, whose role is vital in defending lawyers' rights and interests as a profession. The Convention addresses entitlement to practise, professional rights, freedom of expression, professional discipline and specific protective measures for lawyers and professional associations.

Under the Convention, states must ensure that lawyers can carry out their professional duties without being the target of any form of physical attack, threat, harassment or intimidation or any improper hindrance or interference. Where such circumstances could amount to a criminal offence, parties must conduct an effective investigation. Parties must also ensure that professional associations can operate as independent, self-governing bodies.

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