

COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

MICHAEL O'FLAHERTY

1ST PERIODIC ACTIVITY REPORT 2026

1 January to 30 April

Presented to the Committee of Ministers
and the Parliamentary Assembly

This report contains a summary of the activities carried out by the Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O’Flaherty, between 1 January and 30 April 2026.

1. COUNTRY FOCUS

1.1 Visits and missions

Visit to Italy

The Commissioner carried out a [visit](#) to Italy from 12 to 16 January. The visit focused on the eradication of child poverty and on strengthening the country’s human rights architecture, including by establishing an independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). During the visit, the Commissioner met with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Marina Elvira Calderone; the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Giorgio Silli; the President of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Human Rights, Giovanni Battista Iannuzzi; the Director General of the National Office Against Racial Discrimination, Mattia Peradotto; the Constitutional Affairs Committees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies; the Extraordinary Committee for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of the Senate; and the Italian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He also met with the President of the institution of Ombudsperson for persons deprived of liberty, Riccardo Turrini Vita, and member, Mario Serio, and with the Ombudsperson for Children and Adolescents, Marina Terragni. The Commissioner met with children, teachers, local authorities and representatives of the organisations Con I Bambini and Asinitas in the primary school Pisacane, and with teenagers, social workers and representatives of the organisations Save the Children and Antropos in the “Punto Luce” of Torre Maura. The Commissioner was inspired by interactions with children and adolescents in social centres. He also had meetings with a number of other representatives of civil society and delivered a speech at Roma Tre University. After the visit, the Commissioner met online with senior officials at the Italian Ministry of Education.

The Commissioner acknowledged Italy's efforts to combat child poverty, particularly through the introduction of the universal child allowance (*Assegno Unico e Universale*) in 2022, and the government's focus on protecting children from cuts in social benefits. Despite these efforts, child poverty rates in Italy remain well above the EU average, disproportionately affecting children across regions and social groups. The Commissioner called for a comprehensive, rights-based strategy to eradicate child poverty, addressing key areas such as education, health, and social security. Effective implementation should involve coordination among national authorities, local governments, and civil society, with adequate funding to ensure sustainability. Special attention is needed for the most disadvantaged children, including non-citizens and Roma communities, ensuring that benefit conditions do not block access to services and allowances, and investing in measures for inclusion and structural support.

On the national architecture for the protection of human rights, the Commissioner welcomed Italy's recognition of the need for a NHRI but noted that the country remains one of the few Council of Europe members without one. Noting several proposed bills, he urged the Italian authorities to prioritise its establishment, ensuring the NHRI complies with the Paris Principles and operates independently of the government. It should have a broad mandate, be adequately resourced, and be empowered to oversee human rights issues, including equality and artificial intelligence. Additionally, existing human rights bodies should be strengthened, with a focus on transparency, independence, and adequate staffing.

Following the visit, on 4 March the Commissioner published a letter to the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Italy on the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (see below). His Memorandum on child poverty is forthcoming.

Visit to Armenia

The Commissioner carried out a [visit](#) to Armenia from 3 to 5 February. The visit focused on anti-discrimination, violence against women and the human rights of Karabakh Armenians displaced to Armenia. During the visit, the Commissioner met with the Deputy Prime Minister, Tigran Khachatryan; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ararat Mirzoyan; the Minister of Justice, Srбуhi Galyan; the Minister of Internal Affairs, Arpine Sargsyan; the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Arsen Torosyan; the Chairperson of the Court of Cassation, Lilit Tadevosyan; the Standing Committee on Human Rights Protection and Public Affairs of the National Assembly; the Armenian delegation to PACE; and the Human Rights Defender of Armenia (Ombuds), Anahit Manasyan. He also engaged in discussions with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Françoise Jacob, and representatives of UNHCR and UNFPA; the EU Ambassador, Vassilis Maragos; and with civil society organisations. The Commissioner visited a shelter for women survivors of domestic violence and held discussions with the shelter's administration and survivors.

The Commissioner noted that Armenia still lacks a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework: the long-pending draft law on equality has not yet been adopted. He called on the authorities to swiftly adopt, in consultation with civil society and in line with international standards, an anti-discrimination law establishing effective remedies for victims and empowering a well-resourced equality body with a robust mandate to act on discrimination. He also recommended that the law explicitly list all protected grounds under international law, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

Violence against women remained a pervasive and urgent concern, deeply rooted in patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes that hinder progress and perpetuate victimisation. Despite recent legislative advancements, such as amendments to domestic violence laws and the establishment of support centres, challenges persist, including insufficient victim-centred practices in law enforcement, inconsistent application of protection measures, and limited resources for shelters, particularly in rural areas. The Commissioner emphasised the need for sustained investment in survivor support, proper implementation of laws, and mandatory gender sensitivity training for professionals, especially police officers. He noted that protecting women requires not just laws but a cultural shift within institutions to ensure justice for victims and prevent further harm. The Commissioner noted the clear commitment of Armenia's officials to ratifying the Istanbul Convention, which was reaffirmed at the end of the visit by Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan. He welcomed the fact that many provisions of the Convention have already been reflected in national legislation.

The Commissioner commended Armenia for its swift and practical support for displaced Karabakh Armenians, highlighting efforts in providing housing, social services, financial aid, and educational opportunities. As the country shifts from emergency relief to long-term integration, challenges remain, such as economic integration, housing, document restoration, citizenship, and social inclusion. He encouraged the adoption of a comprehensive, well-resourced integration strategy that prioritises the most vulnerable, fosters self-reliance, and includes civil society and international partners. He recalled that the right to voluntary, safe, and dignified return remains important for Karabakh Armenians, and invited the authorities to ensure that displaced persons are fully informed and supported in making free choices about their future. He acknowledged the sensitivities around this issue amid the ongoing peace process and encouraged continued efforts to uphold rights and respond to the needs of displaced Karabakh Armenians.

Following the visit, on 13 April, the Commissioner published a letter to the Prime Minister of Armenia on the adoption of an anti-discrimination framework (see below). His observations on other topics of the visit were published after the end of the reference period.

Visit to Georgia

From 14-15 April the Commissioner carried out a [visit](#) to Georgia. The visit focused on the continued lack of accountability of state agents for the violent dispersal of protests in 2024 and early 2025; the increasing restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association; and on the human rights of persons in

and displaced from the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. During his visit, the Commissioner met with the Prime Minister, Irakli Kobakhidze; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maka Botchorishvili; the Minister of Internal Affairs, Gela Geladze; the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Mikheil Sarjveladze; the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, Tea Akhvlediani; the Prosecutor General, Giorgi Gvarakidze; the Auditor General, Giorgi Gabitashvili; and the Public Defender of Georgia, Levan Ioseliani. He also met the UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia, Didier Trebucq, as well as representatives of Georgian civil society organisations. He visited the occupation line in Odzisi and met IDPs in the Tserovani settlement.

The Commissioner followed up on [recommendations](#) issued after his visit of January 2025 concerning the lack of accountability for allegations of unlawful arrests and excessive use of force against protesters and journalists by law enforcement and unidentified masked individuals during public demonstrations in 2024 and early 2025. While welcoming a legislative proposal, announced by the Minister of Internal Affairs, which would require all law enforcement personnel to wear visible individual identification numbers, the Commissioner remained concerned that up to then no law enforcement officers had been brought to justice for the violent dispersal of protests in 2024 and early 2025. He reiterated his call for an independent and thorough inquiry into the use of water cannons containing chemical substances against protesters. He drew the authorities' attention to the 2020 UN Human Rights [Guidance](#) on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement and encouraged them to integrate these in their guidance to law enforcement officers. Following up on his [communications](#) to the Committee of Ministers regarding its supervision of the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, he underlined the importance of ensuring that the policing of assemblies aligns with Articles 3, 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as well as the recent judgment of the Grand Chamber in *Tsaava and Others v. Georgia*.

Regarding increasingly restrictive legislation affecting the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the Commissioner noted the cumulative impact of these laws and observed that the authorities had since adopted even more restrictive measures. New amendments to the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations require that prior notification is given to the police if a demonstration is held where vehicles or persons are moving, empower police to change the venue or time of the demonstration if it threatens the unhindered movement of vehicles or persons, and even prohibit protesters from 'blocking' the pavement. Changes to the Administrative Offences Code extend the 60-day detention periods introduced in February 2025 to other offences, such as wearing masks, blocking roads or erecting temporary structures during demonstrations, even when these offences are committed for the first time. New amendments to the Criminal Code introduce criminal sanctions liability of up to two years' imprisonment for repeated protest-related administrative offences. The Commissioner expressed concern that these amendments significantly limit the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and seem to be incompatible with the principles of necessity and proportionality enshrined in the Convention.

The Commissioner raised concerns about the chilling effect of several laws relating to 'foreign influence' on civil society organisations (CSOs), human rights defenders (HRDs) and journalists, as well as administrative and criminal proceedings against dozens of CSOs for receiving foreign funding and/or for alleged involvement in aggravated sabotage. He reiterated his [position](#) regarding the human rights implications of the Transparency of Foreign Influence Law. The Commissioner also expressed concern about the Foreign Agents Registration Law (GEOFARA), which requires legal and natural persons to register as 'agents of a foreign principal', the Law on Grants, which prohibits CSOs from receiving foreign funding without official permission, and the Law on Broadcasting, which bans foreign funding to media outlets for the production or transmission of programmes. While increasing transparency regarding the funding of CSOs may be a legitimate objective, the wide-ranging restrictions appear inconsistent with the criteria of legality, legitimacy, necessity and proportionality within the meaning of Articles 10(2) and 11(2) of the Convention, as well as with the principle of non-discrimination. He called for the repeal of the GEOFARA law and for the repeal or substantial revision of other oppressive legislation to ensure compliance with the Convention.

The Commissioner underlined that CSOs, HRDs and journalists play an essential role in safeguarding human rights and civic space and called on the Georgian authorities to ensure that the ongoing administrative and criminal proceedings into dozens of CSOs are in strict compliance with the state's obligation under the Convention.

The Commissioner's visit provided an opportunity for his first engagement on human rights issues faced by people in and displaced from the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. He acknowledged the efforts of the Georgian authorities to provide assistance, including free healthcare and education, to persons in and displaced from these territories, having met with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Tserovani settlement. The Commissioner also commended the Georgian authorities' support for the right of IDPs to return to their homes under conditions of safety and dignity, as well as their right to freedom of movement across the occupation lines.

The Commissioner's Memorandum following the visit was published after the end of the reference period.

1.2 Memoranda, letters and statements

Statement calling on Georgian Parliament to reject amendments imposing restrictions on civil society

On 2 February, the Commissioner [called](#) on the Parliament of Georgia to reject proposed amendments to seven laws that, if adopted, would impose significant restrictions on civil society organisations and undermine freedom of association. The amendments sought to broaden the legal definition of a 'grant' in the Law on Grants resulting in ordinary and legitimate activities of civil society being subjected to undue state scrutiny, effectively undermining public advocacy and participation in democratic life. The Commissioner noted that the changes amplified a series of restrictive laws and regulations adopted since 2024 which have severely undermined civil society in Georgia. The laws raised serious questions regarding their compatibility with the criteria of legality, legitimacy, necessity and proportionality, as well as with the principle of non-discrimination, enshrined in the ECHR. He further called for an end to all forms of harassment and intimidation directed at human rights defenders and civil society actors.

Statement on hate speech in Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 13 February, the Commissioner [called](#) on politicians in Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to refrain from hateful speech that risked fuelling hate and intolerance against Bosniaks, increasing inter-ethnic tensions and endangering peace. He noted that hate speech is incompatible with the ECHR and its values of tolerance, social peace, and non-discrimination, as stressed by the Court. The Commissioner underlined that public figures, whose words shape public attitudes, carry a particular responsibility, especially in a country where incitement to hatred led to war and atrocities in the recent past.

Statement on crackdowns on peaceful assembly in Hungary

On 17 February, the Commissioner [expressed](#) concern about recent crackdowns on the right to peaceful assembly. He referred to the prosecution of Géza Buzás-Hábel, a young teacher and community activist facing criminal charges and the possibility of imprisonment for organising Pécs Pride in October 2025 and of Gergely Karácsony, the Mayor of Budapest, in relation to the organisation of the 2025 Budapest Pride March. These developments signalled a move backwards as Hungarian authorities implemented constitutional and legal amendments, adopted in March and April 2025, which effectively ban peaceful events that promote LGBTI equality. The Commissioner had previously [critiqued](#) the amendments for fuelling discrimination and shrinking civic space. He urged authorities to halt the use of criminal and administrative measures which deter peaceful assembly; to amend or repeal the laws underpinning these restrictions; and to reverse the clampdown on human rights defenders and civic space.

Letter to the Chair of the Judicial Affairs and Education Committee of the Parliament of Iceland on the "Departure Centre" bill

On 25 February, the Commissioner published a [letter](#) addressed to the Chair of the Judicial Affairs and Education

Committee of the Parliament of Iceland, Víðir Reynisson, encouraging Committee members to amend the bill establishing a departure centre for foreign nationals to exclude provision for the detention of children based on their migration status or that of their parents. While the bill limits detention of children with their families to nine days and frames it as a measure of last resort, it does not require authorities to show, in each individual case, that no alternative measure is possible. Citing the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the position of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Commissioner called for amendments to the bill to ensure that if certain measures need to be taken in the interest of migration proceedings, these are non-custodial, ensuring that primary consideration is given to the best interests of the child.

Memorandum on child poverty in the United Kingdom

On 25 February, the Commissioner published a [memorandum](#) on child poverty in the United Kingdom, following his visit to the country from 30 June to 4 July 2025. In his memorandum, the Commissioner acknowledged a significant recent shift, including through measures taken after the visit, in the government's approach to tackling child poverty, and outlined the critical steps still needed to resolve the ongoing challenging situation. He welcomed the UK government's decision to abolish the two-child limit on social security payments and the publication of the strategy "Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty". He called for full political priority to be given to the implementation of the strategy, and to ensure all necessary resources are allocated to this.

The Commissioner encouraged the authorities to adopt a human rights-based approach in their implementation of child poverty measures, including by introducing mandatory child rights impact assessments and by ensuring close attention to children from particularly affected groups. He called for clear and measurable child poverty reduction targets and timelines to be elaborated and their embedding in legislation to be considered. He recommended strengthening international and domestic legal frameworks for combating child poverty, including by ratifying the Revised European Social Charter and by incorporating relevant international instruments in domestic law. Finally, he encouraged building on the abolition of the two-child limit by addressing further issues such as: removing the benefit cap and ensuring that the level of social security payments is sufficient to provide an adequate standard of living; using the ongoing review of health and disability related benefits as an opportunity to reduce poverty; carrying out a comprehensive review of the No Recourse to Public Funds policy, which severely impacts on children with certain migration statuses; and improving the accessibility of the social security system and reconsidering potentially unreasonable sanctions currently in place.

The comments of the United Kingdom authorities on the memorandum are available on the Commissioner's website.

Letter to the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Italy on the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution

On 4 March, following his visit to Italy in January (see above), the Commissioner published a [letter](#) addressed to the President of the Senate of Italy, Ignazio La Russa, and to the President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Lorenzo Fontana. He encouraged the Italian Parliament to establish a fully independent NHRI with a broad mandate. While a number of human rights bodies exist in Italy with sectoral competencies and varying degrees of independence, Italy is one of the few remaining Council of Europe member states without an NHRI, despite repeated commitments to establish one in line with the Paris Principles of the United Nations. Several models of NHRIs are possible, but the Commissioner noted that the new body would have to align with the relevant standards, particularly regarding its mandate, autonomy, and resources. Furthermore, while existing human rights bodies have been able to take meaningful action, their legal and institutional frameworks are not always conducive to ensuring independence and effectiveness and the Commissioner encouraged the Italian Parliament to ensure that these principles are applied in respect of those bodies as well.

The reply of the President of the Senate of Italy is available on the Commissioner's website.

Letter to the Prime Minister of Armenia on the adoption of an anti-discrimination framework

On 13 April, following his visit to Armenia in February (see above) the Commissioner published a [letter](#) addressed to the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, recommending that Armenia adopts comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. He welcomed Armenia's progress, including the new sectoral legislation and guarantees in the Criminal Code, as well as the proactive engagement by the Human Rights Defender. Noting that the Ministry of Justice is preparing a Draft Law on the Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination, the Commissioner invited the Prime Minister to seize the opportunity to create a robust anti-discrimination framework that meets international standards and the needs of a diverse society, in consultation with civil society and international partners, including the Council of Europe. The Commissioner highlighted several issues to be addressed to ensure that the future law fully aligns with Council of Europe standards. They include providing the Human Rights Defender with a clearly defined mandate as an equality body, with the competencies, powers and resources necessary to effectively combat discrimination and promote equality. Other issues included ensuring legal certainty in the protection of the human rights of LGBTI people; enabling organisations with a legitimate interest to bring or intervene in anti-discrimination cases; and addressing the issue of hate speech.

The reply of the Prime Minister of Armenia is available on the Commissioner's website.

Letter to the Minister of the Interior and Administration of Poland on the suspension of asylum and removal practices

On 12 April, the Commissioner published a [letter](#) addressed to the Minister of the Interior and Administration of Poland, Marcin Kierwiński, expressing concern that the Polish authorities were applying legislation which provides for the temporarily suspension of access to asylum at the Poland-Belarus border in every case in which border guards deemed a person to have crossed the border irregularly. This reportedly included persons who moved, or attempted to move, to other EU member states and who were then returned or refused entry at the Polish border. Having previously [expressed](#) concerns about the denial of asylum at the border, the Commissioner noted that the suspension is now being applied outside the border context. He also drew attention to recent reports of Afghan nationals being returned to Afghanistan without an opportunity to apply for asylum. Recalling the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, the Commissioner noted that any removal must be preceded by a rigorous and individualised risk assessment and that all individuals must have a genuine and effective opportunity to challenge their expulsion. The Commissioner invited the authorities to provide information on the measures taken to ensure that their asylum and migration policies comply with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Memorandum on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and combating racism and discrimination in Germany

On 15 April, the Commissioner published a [memorandum](#) on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and combating racism and discrimination in Germany, with a focus on antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, following his visit to the country in October 2025. In his memorandum, the Commissioner noted increasing pressure on democratic freedoms in Germany and noted that the fight against all forms of hatred should fully respect the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression for all members of society and protect civic space. He took note of reports of shrinking space for civil society, human rights defenders and national human rights institutions and called for stronger protection of their work. In Germany, as across Europe, civil society serves as a vital public watchdog, and it is essential to ensure that human rights defenders are protected from smear campaigns and threats that hinder their work and that they have access to stable funding.

The Commissioner raised concerns about undue restrictions on various peaceful protests, especially those related to the Palestine solidarity movement, and about reports of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers in Berlin and elsewhere during protests relating to the war in Gaza. Any restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly should be based on individualised assessments rather than blanket assumptions or a generalised fear of tensions and banning an assembly should be a last resort. He stated that freedom of expression has faced disproportionate restrictions, particularly in debates about Palestinian rights and legitimate criticism of the Israeli government. He noted that while antisemitism should be tackled with every tool at our disposal, the distinction between legitimate

criticism of state policies and antisemitism must not become blurred. He recommended that the authorities refrain from blanket prohibitions of slogans, symbols, or other forms of expression in support of the Palestinian people. Any decision to restrict human rights must be made on a case-by-case basis. He also [reiterated](#) his call on the authorities to ensure that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism is not distorted or misapplied to stifle freedom of expression or legitimate criticism of state policies. Promoting an environment that encourages diverse perspectives through inclusive consultation and combating negative stereotypes of Jews, Muslims, Palestinians and Arabs – particularly within academia, schools, and the media – are essential for open public debate, intercultural dialogue and tolerance.

The Commissioner noted a concerning rise in antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred. He welcomed Germany's commitment to protecting Jewish life and reiterated the importance of effectively tackling antisemitism by increasing awareness and promoting Holocaust remembrance. He further noted that anti-Muslim hatred should be recognised as a societal problem and efforts to raise awareness of and address it should be enhanced across state institutions. To strengthen the national anti-discrimination framework, the Commissioner encouraged the authorities to reform the General Equal Treatment Law (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*), so that it covers discrimination by public authorities and in all areas of life, and to adopt legislation to eliminate and prevent racial profiling.

The comments of the German authorities on the memorandum are available on the Commissioner's website.

1.3 Meetings with authorities

Meeting with the Attorney General and the Advocate General of Scotland, United Kingdom

On 30 January, the Commissioner met with the Rt Hon Lord Richard Hermer KC, Attorney General for England and Wales and with Baroness Catherine Smith of Cluny KC, the Advocate General of Scotland, in Strasbourg. They exchanged on current human rights challenges to the system of the ECHR.

Meeting with the Minister for Asylum and Migration of Belgium

On 3 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Anneleen Van Bossuyt, Minister of Asylum and Migration, and of Social Integration, in charge of Major Cities Policy of Belgium, in Brussels. They exchanged views on the system of the ECHR, particularly in the context of migration.

Meeting with the Vice-President of the Council of State, the National Ombudsman and the President of the Court of Auditors of the Netherlands

On 13 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Thom de Graaf, Vice-President of the Council of State of the Netherlands, Reinier van Zutphen, the National Ombudsman of the Netherlands, and Pieter Duisenberg, President of the Court of Auditors of the Netherlands, in Strasbourg. They discussed human rights developments in the Netherlands and Europe, including challenges to the ECHR system.

Meeting with the Ambassador for Human Rights of France

On 25 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Isabelle Rome, Ambassador for Human Rights of France, in Strasbourg. They discussed challenges facing the global community and how forging strong alliances is essential to ensuring human rights remain the roadmap for upholding human dignity.

Meeting with the Head of the Mariupol City Military Administration and elected Mayor of Mariupol, Ukraine

On 1 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Vadym Boychenko, Head of the Mariupol City Military Administration and elected Mayor of Mariupol and his delegation, in Strasbourg. He listened to testimony from 13-year-old Illia Matviienko who survived the brutal siege of Mariupol and called for the international community to recognize these atrocities, ensure accountability and provide support to the displaced and affected.

Meeting with the Minister for Equality of Spain

On 22 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Ana Redondo, Minister for Equality of Spain, in Strasbourg. They discussed Spain's pioneering policies and measures to combat gender-based violence and protecting the rights of LGBTI people.

2. PRIORITY AREAS OF ACTION

The following section contains a brief description of the main activities of the Commissioner organised by thematic areas, during the period in question.

2.1 Impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on human rights

On 14 January, the Commissioner [condemned](#) the attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure and appealed for urgent humanitarian support. He noted that Russia had intensified its attacks on civilian infrastructure, particularly targeting energy facilities, and that significant damage was reported in cities such as Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, and Kharkiv. The strikes severely disrupted ongoing repair efforts and left millions without access to essential services during the harsh winter period. The Commissioner deplored the dire humanitarian consequences, as widespread power outages affected heating, water supply, healthcare facilities, and communication networks. Vulnerable populations, including older persons, persons with disabilities, and children, faced life-threatening conditions due to extreme cold. He urged the international community, including Council of Europe member states, to scale up humanitarian assistance, such as providing emergency housing, power hubs, and essential supplies. Finally, the Commissioner reiterated that those responsible for the attacks must be held to account, recalling that the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Russian military commanders concerning attacks on Ukraine's electricity infrastructure, among other charges.

On 3 February, ahead of announced peace talks between Ukraine, Russia and the United States, the Commissioner [issued](#) an appeal for tangible and immediate relief to be brought to Ukrainian civilians. He deplored the sustained campaign of Russian attacks that continued to target Ukrainian civilians the weeks before, resulting in daily casualties. Over a single weekend, at least 15 workers were killed in a strike near a mine in Dnipro oblast, and patients and health workers were injured in a maternity ward in Zaporizhzhia. These incidents exemplified a broader pattern of attacks on civilians in homes, public transport, and streets, including drone strikes. The Commissioner expressed grave concern at the deepening humanitarian crisis as record cold temperatures gripped Ukraine, exacerbated by repeated strikes on civilian energy infrastructure that left millions without heating, water, and electricity. The Commissioner called for an immediate end to the strikes, accountability for those responsible, and redress for victims. He further called for the unconditional release of all civilian detainees held in Russia and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including children transferred to Russia, and for further exchanges of prisoners of war to be given priority. The Commissioner underscored that peace in Ukraine must be anchored in the international human rights framework, with the rights and dignity of the Ukrainian people placed at the centre of all discussions.

During the reference period, the Commissioner worked to keep human rights centred pathways to peace and recovery on the international political agenda in his continued cooperation with international partners. This included

several meetings with EU and UN officials in Strasbourg and during missions in Geneva and Brussels (*see section below on External cooperation and complementarity*).

The same priority is reflected in the Commissioner's [address](#) to the 50th Session of the Congress in Strasbourg on 31 March, during the plenary debate on 'Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine: A Strategic Approach to Supporting the Recovery and Reconstruction of Ukraine at Local and Regional Levels'. In his speech on a human rights-centred path to reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine, the Commissioner focused on local and regional initiatives and praised the resilience, innovation, and competent service delivery of Ukrainian communities he witnessed during visits to Kyiv, Bucha, and Lviv. He commended the Congress for its steadfast support to Ukrainian local administrations since 2022, including governance projects and partnerships, and encouraged continued efforts to raise awareness among displaced Ukrainians about the Register of Damage. The Commissioner outlined five foundational principles for a human rights-centred path to reconstruction and recovery: participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and legality. He stressed the importance of involving affected communities, ensuring transparency and justice, empowering local actors, and complying with human rights law. He highlighted the need to address the diverse needs of conflict-affected groups, to promote social inclusion and cohesion, to protect the environment, and to involve civil society. He also underscored the importance of accountability for all actors, including the private sector. The Commissioner called for continued planning and preparation despite ongoing aggression, with the ultimate goal of "building back better" by centring human dignity in all efforts.

Throughout the period under review, the Commissioner continued to react to Russia's deadly attacks on civilians in Ukraine. On 9 January, he [reacted](#) to successive attacks against civilian and energy infrastructure in Ukraine that week. On 17 March, the Commissioner [deplored](#) the Nistru River pollution crisis caused by a Russian strike on Ukraine. On 16 April, the Commissioner [called](#) for accountability and support for the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine following a large-scale attack that injured and killed dozens of civilians across the country, including children.

2.2 Embedding human rights in the great issues of the day

2.2.1 Migration (human rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants)

During the reporting period, the human rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants were the subject of country-specific work, notably in Iceland and Poland (*see Country focus: Memoranda, letters and statements*).

On 27 January, the Commissioner [expressed](#) concern about multiple maritime incidents in the central Mediterranean, calling on states to prioritise search and rescue operations, as saving lives at sea and disembarking survivors in a place of safety represented a legal and moral obligation.

On 28 January, the Commissioner published his Shout Out '[Efficiency through dignity: why Europe's return policies need human rights](#)'. He highlighted that there is a false narrative of a zero-sum game between effective returns and human rights compliance. Treating human rights as an obstacle to be bypassed in returns procedures does not increase efficiency. Only return policies that are lawful, fair and dignified can deliver results. Transparent and fair processes lead to more acceptance of outcomes and increase public trust, which also allows partnering with civil society. Treating people with dignity helps maintain the trust and co-operation of international partners crucial for return. The Commissioner highlighted in particular the issue of return hubs as a supposed quick fix for return procedures, but this must not create human rights black holes. States should carry out thorough risk assessment, establish legally binding safeguards, effective remedies and clear stay limits, while excluding children from being sent to such hubs. More generally, the Commissioner called on states to resist the urge to make detention and coercion their first instinct, and rather, to invest in voluntary returns and alternatives to detention, while ending the detention of children. The Commissioner warned that continuing to prioritise a 'tough' rhetoric over human rights

would lead to a triple loss: more human suffering, reduced international credibility, and no real increase in return numbers.

On 29 January, the Commissioner met with Lord Michael German, General Rapporteur on Asylum and Migration of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg to discuss European migration and asylum policies.

On 11 February, the Commissioner [met](#) with member of the European Parliament Lena Düpont in Strasbourg, to discuss human rights aspects of key migration developments, including safe third countries, smuggling, externalisation and returns.

On 24 February, the Commissioner had an [exchange](#) with the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) on externalised asylum and migration policies, in Brussels. In his introductory remarks, he noted that migration has always been a fundamental human phenomenon, with people seeking asylum and returning voluntarily when they no longer have the right to stay. Despite this, there is an increasing emphasis in the European Union on “tough” responses to migration, often involving externalisation of asylum, return procedures, and border management, sometimes disguised as “innovative solutions.” The Commissioner’s [report](#) on *Externalised asylum and migration policies and human rights law*, published in October 2025, examined these practices and revealed that they often entail significant human rights risks, with examples from countries like Australia, the US, and Israel showing the potential for violations. These include issues like inadequate safeguards, arbitrary detention, and exposure to ill-treatment, particularly in the case of externalised asylum and return procedures. The report emphasises the importance of ensuring that such initiatives are subject to human rights assessments, robust safeguards, and legal accountability. It concludes with recommendations for a precautionary approach, respect for legal principles, and increased transparency to prevent responsibility shifting and uphold human dignity. The Commissioner also warns against the erosion of the rule of law and called for reflection on whether European migration policies are aligned with human rights obligations.

On 2 March, the Commissioner published his [Observations on the proposed EU Returns Regulation](#), which, if adopted, would impact on the protection of the human rights of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants across a large part of the Council of Europe. He highlighted that the principle of non-refoulement is the bedrock of any human rights compliant return legislation. In view of increasing risks that asylum seekers in Europe never have their personal circumstances and risks upon return assessed on the merits, or only superficially, he called for the Regulation to ensure comprehensive protection against refoulement. He also called for proposals to weaken possibilities of appeal against return decisions to be rejected, and that automatic suspensive effect should be given to any remedy in relation to an arguable claim that return would pose a risk in relation to Articles 2 or 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. As regards return hubs, the Commissioner sets out the main elements of his 2025 [report](#) on externalisation. Engagement on return hubs should be done with precaution, after mandatory and comprehensive human rights risk assessments, the development of risk mitigation strategies, and the establishment of effective transparency, monitoring and accountability mechanisms. If implemented, return hubs should furthermore meet specific safeguards, including: only using agreements binding under international law, ensuring that all transfers are subject to effective remedies; having clear rules for vulnerable persons – with all children being excluded from being transferred to return hubs; not using return hubs for asylum seekers whose applications for protection have not yet been decided on the merits; having clear and enforceable standards on reception conditions and the possible use of detention; and having provisions to prevent people in return hubs being left in protracted legal uncertainty. The Commissioner also called for the Regulation to give preference to voluntary return over forced removals, as a key principle in human rights compliant return procedures. Similarly, alternatives to detention should be prioritised, proposals to impose even longer detention periods than currently should be rejected, and children should be excluded from immigration detention. Finally, the Commissioner called attention to other issues requiring further human rights attention in deliberations about the Regulation, including sanctions imposed against persons deemed not to co-operate with the authorities, law enforcement powers to detect people staying irregularly, and the situation of those unable to return.

On 2 March, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) Ideas Lab panel on ‘Rethinking return: safe third countries, return hubs and rights-based alternatives’, in Brussels. He outlined guardrails to mitigate the human rights risks of externalising return procedures: state should act based on facts rather than false assumptions; ensure transparency and accountability by making arrangements with partner countries treaty-based and publicly accessible; ensure impact assessments, risk mitigation strategies and independent human rights monitoring are hardwired into the system, not added as an afterthought; ensure states do not abdicate their legal duty to honour the right to seek asylum through third-party arrangements; avoid the risk of refoulement by ensuring adequate access to remedy, rather than rushed appeal processes with no suspensive effect; respect the right to liberty by prioritising alternatives to detention; and refrain from transferring people to countries with which they have no connection, and from applying “safe country” concepts in ways that do not grant adequate value to individual circumstances.

On 3 March, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at a United Nations Human Rights Council side event organised by the Platform of Independent Experts on Refugee Rights (PIERR), in Geneva. He emphasised that strong international cooperation is essential to resist a critical trend: the erosion of safeguards for asylum seekers. He stressed that externalisation of asylum and migration policies are where compliance with international law is most at risk and urged states to exercise extreme caution. The Commissioner reiterated that there should be no externalisation of asylum and migration policies without detailed assessment of the human rights implications and clear and legally enforceable safeguards.

On 25 March, as the European Parliament debated the EU Return Regulation, the Commissioner [urged](#) careful consideration of its human rights impact.

On 1 April, the Commissioner [deplored](#) the loss of lives following two devastating shipwrecks in the Mediterranean, between Libya and Lampedusa and between Bodrum and Kos. He reiterated his call on states to prioritise search and rescue operations.

On 17 April, the Commissioner [discussed](#) the ‘Global Refugee Protection System in the Face of Displacement Crisis’ in a panel at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum together with Barham Salih, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Susanne Raab, Director General of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and Khalilur Rahman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

2.2.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI) and human rights

During the reference period, the Commissioner regularly addressed AI as a cross-cutting theme in his work, including through a [Shout Out](#) on social media restrictions for children; speeches on [freedom of expression](#), [media literacy and information integrity](#); and participation in a [side event](#) on digitalisation of social protection systems (see *Other thematic work*).

On 6 March, the Commissioner [welcomed](#) the Committee of Ministers’ adoption of new recommendations on equality and AI and accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. He called on member states to promote equality, including gender equality, prevent discrimination throughout the entire AI lifecycle, and strengthen legal responses and accountability for violence against women and girls - including deepfakes and AI-generated abuse.

On 17 March, the Commissioner issued his [Chair’s Notes on ‘Governing generative AI: closing the gaps to protect human rights’](#), following a consultation with civil society organisations in November 2025. In the report, the Commissioner highlighted the risks stemming from a significant push to roll back regulations in the name of competitiveness, identifying critical gaps in Europe’s current regulatory framework, specifically regarding the deployment of generative AI. Among the primary findings, the report identifies that: automated systems, especially in security and military contexts, must be subject to meaningful human oversight due to the high risk they pose to

human rights; AI-scaled disinformation is flooding and degrading information environments, with particularly harmful consequences for children, migrants, women and LGBTI people; and that a shift to default opt-in consent models would ensure greater user control over personal data. In this context, the report warns against the environmental and societal impacts of AI, which should form an integral part of policy discussions, and urges the authorities to mandate safety-by-design for all AI products used by children, as well as to prohibit AI uses that carry a serious risk of human rights violations. The report identifies four key areas of action: ensuring meaningful, funded participation of civil society in AI decision-making to provide checks and balances; granting independent researchers, journalists and civil society organisations access to the data used by AI systems and strengthen transparency in public procurement; adequately funding national human rights structures and oversight authorities to match the technical scale of AI; and ensuring enforcement of existing EU digital regulations and scaling up investment in digital literacy and human rights compliance.

2.2.3 *Environment and human rights*

On 14 February, the Commissioner [met](#) with Ralph Regenvanu, Vanuatu Minister for Climate Change Adaptation, Energy, Environment, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards and Disaster Management, in the margins of the 62nd Munich Security Conference. They discussed the 2025 Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change and the importance of addressing climate change as a human rights issue.

On 9 March, the Commissioner published a [Shout Out](#) on 'Climate action and accountability for survival', expressing concern that the climate crisis is no longer a distant threat but already causing widespread harm, including loss of life, health risks, displacement, and damage to livelihoods. He underlined that the impacts fall hardest on vulnerable populations, worsening inequality, instability, and economic strain. Despite this urgency, some governments are weakening environmental protections, prioritising short-term gains, and undermining science and climate action. Meanwhile, courts have clarified that states have a legal duty to address climate change and protect human rights; failing to act can lead to legal consequences. To meet these obligations, countries must limit global warming to 1.5°C, reduce emissions, strengthen adaptation, and ensure access to justice and participation. A just transition to clean energy and stronger international cooperation are essential. The Commissioner expressed support for the proposed UN General Assembly resolution aiming to turn recent legal guidance by the ICJ into concrete global action. He urged Council of Europe member states to back this effort, stressing that climate change is one of humanity's greatest threats and must be treated as inseparable from human rights, peace, and global stability.

On 17 March, the Commissioner [expressed](#) serious concern over the contamination of the Nistru River caused by a Russian strike on Ukraine, which has adversely impacted the Republic of Moldova's access to potable water.

On 25 March, the Commissioner [met](#) in Strasbourg with Michel Forst, the Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention, to discuss challenges and protection for environmental human rights defenders.

On 24 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Senator Aurora Floridaia, Chairperson of the [PACE parliamentary network for a healthy environment](#), in Strasbourg. They discussed the importance of urgent action to advance on protecting the right to a healthy environment and prioritising those most impacted by climate change.

2.2.4 *Inequality (child poverty)*

During the reference period, the Commissioner's work in this area included notably a visit to Italy with a strong focus on child poverty and the publication of a memorandum on child poverty in the United Kingdom (see *County focus*).

On 18 March, the Commissioner issued a [Joint Statement](#) with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier De Schutter, on the occasion of the Council of Europe High-Level Conference on Social Rights, issuing an urgent call for action to intensify the fight against poverty, including through the adoption

of national anti-poverty strategies informed by Article 30 of the European Social Charter. In his institutional statement to the High-Level Conference, the Commissioner raised the unmet social needs and rights of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion as one of the top priorities in his mandate.

2.3 Forgotten people: human rights of Roma and Travellers

On 22 January, the Commissioner [welcomed](#) the adoption of the Council of Europe Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2026-2030, urging member states to implement this roadmap. He underlined that sustained commitment, coordinated action and partnerships are essential to effecting change and guaranteeing dignity and equal rights.

On 26 January, the Commissioner [met](#) with Georgios Stamatis, PACE General Rapporteur on Roma and Travellers in Strasbourg, to discuss continuing cooperation and the need to raise awareness of the human rights situation of Europe's largest ethnic minority.

On 26 February, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Permanent Missions to the UN in Geneva of Ireland and North Macedonia, the Commissioner brought together UN leadership and experts, state representatives and Roma and Traveller human rights defenders to discuss how to tackle antigypsyism and the way forward during a [side event](#) entitled "Voices, Rights, Action – Standing with Roma and Travellers" at the 61st Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Commissioner also [delivered](#) the opening remarks at the inauguration of the *The Unheard 12 Million* photo exhibition accompanying his book of the same name. He expressed his respect for the OHCHR's work on the human rights of Roma. The Commissioner emphasised that advocating for the human rights of Roma and Travellers is a top priority during his mandate, given that these communities, numbering around 12 million across Europe, face severe marginalisation, human rights abuses, and hate. Sharing his experience traveling around Europe to meet Roma and Traveller communities, the Commissioner highlighted both the resilience and cultural richness of these communities, as well as the harsh conditions they face, such as: poor living conditions; widespread discrimination in healthcare, particularly impacting Roma and Traveller women and girls; persistent segregation in schools, despite legal efforts to end it; lack of access to jobs, with qualified individuals being rejected due to their ethnicity or background; and abusive police practices. The Commissioner urged non-Roma and non-Travellers to reflect on their responsibility to work alongside these communities, aiming to achieve the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where all people are free and equal in dignity and rights.

On 3 March, the Commissioner addressed the event presenting the results of the Roma Child VOICE project, organised by the Prolepsis Institute in Athens, by video message.

On 1 April, to mark the start of the Opre Roma! month at the Council of Europe, the Commissioner had an [exchange](#) with the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) and Roma and Traveller-led civil society in Strasbourg. He highlighted six pillars to drive change for Roma and Travellers across Europe: confronting racism in our societies; working better with Roma and Travellers in true partnership; celebrating diverse cultures to break through the wall of indifference; remembering and educating on the Roma Holocaust and past injustices, such as forced sterilisation; bridging national initiatives at the local level; and choosing hope as every Roma and Traveller child's dream deserves a fair shot. The Commissioner also [spoke](#) at the launch of the exhibition '*Holocaust of the Soul*' by Czech Roma artist Zdeněk Daniel with musical accompaniment by Djiben, stressing the crucial role of artists as conveyors of messages.

On 7 April, the Commissioner delivered a video message to the Conference on "Roma Rights, Dignity and Participation: Strengthening European Cooperation and Roma Leadership", organised by Union Romani Voice in partnership with the Consulate General of Romania in London with the support of the Embassy of Romania to the United Kingdom.

On 7 April, the Commissioner [delivered](#) a statement ahead of International Roma Day 2026. He paid tribute to Roma and Travellers' rich cultures and contributions to our societies and reiterated the importance of the day as a moment of recognition and a call to action, highlighting Roma and Travellers' resolve to reclaim a narrative anchored in dignity and equal rights. The Commissioner stressed the challenges the communities face and called on authorities to turn commitments into action. He highlighted that the full implementation of the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights must be a priority, backed by political will and adequate resources. He stressed the importance of representation and the need to support the participation of Roma and Traveller women and girls, often catalysts of change, in building more inclusive societies.

On 16 April, the Commissioner's travelling exhibition accompanying his book *The Unheard 12 Million* was [launched](#) by Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre at their venue in Dublin, Ireland, to mark International Traveller and Roma Day 2026.

On 21 April, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at the European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Roma Week opening event on 'Roma Equality and Social Investment in the Next EU Budget', held at the European Parliament in Brussels. In his online address, the Commissioner advocated for Roma and Travellers to continue to be central to EU policy, planning, and resource distribution. The Commissioner underlined the need for a human rights approach that fosters true participation, with a focus on Roma and Traveller-led CSOs, Roma women and young people; that promotes local action; that calls out hatred and tackles antigypsyism; that invests in both remembrance and the celebration of diverse cultural identities; and that enables strategic litigation.

On 23 April, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at the side event on "The Importance of Historical Memory in Preventing and Countering Discrimination against Roma and Travellers in Europe," hosted by Georgios Stamatidis, PACE General Rapporteur for Roma and Travellers, in Strasbourg. He reiterated that our present is shaped by our past and underlined the need to invest in remembering, for healing, justice and ensuring 'never again' and in celebrating diversity.

2.4 Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society

In the reference period, the Commissioner continued to pay close attention to the situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states.

On 2 February, in his [speech](#) at the International Conference "Shaping Democratic Renewal: Civic Space and the Path to a New Democratic Pact for Europe" in Strasbourg, the Commissioner highlighted the pivotal role of civil society in shaping modern Europe, emphasising its contribution to democracy, rule of law, and human rights. He noted that current pressures facing civil society -ranging from funding crises to restrictive regulations- are threatening essential services, particularly for marginalised groups. He called for stronger protective mechanisms for civil society across Europe and urged states to ensure their laws and policies support the continued role of civil society, warning of the fragile nature of democratic achievements and the risk of regression if these protections are not upheld. The Commissioner discussed civil society's pivotal role in service-delivery, policy discussion, and social change. He also noted that civil society had been a leading force in identifying risks in digital spaces, such as algorithmic discrimination and technology misuse by law enforcement.

In addition, the Commissioner addressed the situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states through country-specific interventions, including public interventions on Georgia and Hungary (see *Country focus*) and Türkiye (see *Engagement with Council of Europe Institutions: System of the European Convention on Human Rights*), and through exchanges and meetings with a wide range of partners.

On 27 January, the Commissioner [met](#) with human rights defenders and civil society organisations representatives from Georgia in Strasbourg, to discuss human rights situation and the impact of restrictive laws and administrative

measures on their work. On 23 February, the Commissioner [met](#) with Brussels-based civil society organisations to discuss key developments impacting human rights in the EU and its member states.

3. OTHER THEMATIC WORK

The following section outlines the Commissioner's other thematic work in the following areas: freedom of expression, media freedom and safety of journalists; combating racism and intolerance; women's rights and gender equality; children's rights and rights of young people; and social rights.

Freedom of expression, media freedom and safety of journalists

On 2 March, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) Ideas Lab plenary session on 'Freedom of expression – a modern leviathan', in Brussels. He detailed five main observations: free speech must be balanced as absolute free speech is dangerous, requiring careful oversight while avoiding over-restriction; promote the practical application of freedom of expression by supporting debate, diverse voices, and a thriving media to foster this freedom; limit speech only when necessary, following legality, proportionality, and careful use of laws like defamation; enforce legitimate restrictions, actively prosecute hate crimes and enforce regulations like the EU Digital Services Act; and address speech-related problems like disinformation through digital literacy and other proactive strategies.

On 20 March, the Commissioner [addressed](#) the High-Level Conference on Media Literacy and Information Integrity: Building Resilience to Disinformation and FIMI in Europe, in Chişinău. Speaking on 'What would a human rights-based response to disinformation and information manipulation look like?', he welcomed the Council of Europe's efforts to address disinformation while respecting human rights, stressing that disinformation undermines various rights, including privacy, political participation, and the rights of marginalised groups. The Commissioner advocated for a human rights-based approach, focusing on principles like universality, participation, subsidiarity, and accountability. This approach calls for involving civil society, ensuring transparency, and strengthening national-level responses to disinformation. Finally, the Commissioner underscored the importance of EU regulations like the AI Act and Digital Services Act, which help regulate the digital space. He urged caution in revising these laws to maintain their effectiveness. The conclusion calls for a public discourse grounded in integrity and human rights.

Combating racism and intolerance

The Commissioner raised concerns about racism and discrimination in his memorandum following his visit to Germany, with particular attention to antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred (see *Country focus*).

On 27 January, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at an event dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust and the prevention of crimes against humanity organised by *Regards d'enfants* in partnership with the Municipality of Rothau and the European Centre of Deported Resistance Members in Rothau, France. He reflected on the historical significance of Rothau, from where people were forced toward the Struthof camp, honoured those subjected to atrocities and whose resistance the Nazis sought to erase, and praised the Memory and Human Rights Garden created by children and young people as a living tribute to the victims. Recalling the genocide of six million Jews and 500 000 Roma and Sinti, and all victims of Nazi persecution, he emphasised that remembrance is not only about the past but also a foundation for protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law today and guiding the future. He encouraged young people to carry forward the responsibility of memory, uphold justice and reject hatred and highlighted the importance of working together to build a future grounded in equal rights and dignity for all. On the same day, the Commissioner [visited](#) the former concentration camp of Natzweiler-Struthof and the European Centre of Deported Resistance Members.

On 10 February, the Commissioner [addressed](#) the Muslim Jewish Leadership Council event on ‘Shared Responsibilities: Local Authorities and Religious Leadership Countering Hate Speech in Europe’ in Strasbourg. He called for community-led responses, partnerships with local authorities, better data gathering and accountability, underlying that supporting faith communities is essential to standing up for human rights.

On 17 February, the Commissioner met with Irene Kitsou-Milonas, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and all forms of religious intolerance. They discussed areas of shared concern and complementarities in their respective activities.

On 16 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with the Chief Rabbi of Strasbourg and Bas-Rhin, Harold-Abraham Weill, and other Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Mendel Samama, representative of the Conference of European Rabbis to the European institution, in Strasbourg. The Commissioner denounced the surge in antisemitic attacks on synagogues and Jewish community buildings across Europe and expressed his firm solidarity and support.

Women’s rights and gender equality

On 6 March, the Commissioner [welcomed](#) the Committee of Ministers’ adoption of new recommendations on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. He called on member states to promote equality, including gender equality, and prevent discrimination throughout the entire AI lifecycle and to strengthen legal responses and accountability for violence against women and girls - including deepfakes and AI-generated abuse.

Children’s rights and rights of young people

On 23 February, the Commissioner published a [Shout Out](#) ‘Regulate platforms, not children’ urging European governments considering minimum-age restrictions for social media to proceed with caution, as blanket bans risk shifting responsibility from platforms to children rather than addressing the root causes of harm. While concerns about children’s exposure to violent content, grooming, disinformation, manipulative designs, and privacy violations are legitimate, these issues stem from platform design choices and business models. The Commissioner stressed that effective regulation should instead impose clear, enforceable duties on platforms to protect children’s rights by design, including algorithmic transparency, independent audits, risk assessments, restrictions on targeted advertising, and meaningful accountability mechanisms. Recent European Commission actions under the Digital Services Act show that sanctions and oversight can work, and member states should coordinate enforcement and ensure penalties outweigh any economic gains from harmful practices. Before enacting bans, governments should consult experts, civil society, and children to ensure human rights-compliant solutions that target the true source of harm: the platforms themselves.

On 20 April, the Commissioner had an exchange with students from Leiden Law School Advanced LL.M. in European and International Human Rights Law, in Strasbourg. They exchanged on topical human rights issues.

Social Rights

On 19 March, at the High level Conference on Social Rights, in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, the Commissioner [delivered](#) an institutional statement focused on ‘Social rights: Bridging the gap from policy to people’. He highlighted the widespread unmet social needs and unimplemented social rights across Europe, including inadequate housing, healthcare discrimination, and child poverty, which affects nearly 25% of children in the EU. The Commissioner emphasised the compounded impact of intersectional disadvantage, particularly for Roma, migrants, and LGBTI communities. He urged states to make three pledges: treat social needs as human rights by committing to and accepting the monitoring of the European Social Charter; align national actions with UN and EU social rights frameworks; and strengthen local governance to better address specific community needs. The Commissioner concluded with a call to pursue equality, fairness, and social justice across Europe.

The previous day, the Commissioner [spoke](#) at the side event on "Digitalisation of social protection systems in Europe -The promise of efficiency versus the reality of exclusion" organised in the margins of the High level Conference on Social Rights. He welcomed the focus on the Charter of Social Rights, emphasising that social rights are human rights and obligations for states and highlighted the central role played by social welfare systems in enabling citizens to enjoy all human rights. The Commissioner underscored the potential of digitalisation and AI to improve social welfare delivery, including better client support, fraud detection, and predictive analytics for demand forecasting. However, he also cautioned about the risks, citing five key concerns: prioritising efficiency over quality, discriminatory outcomes, automation bias, digital exclusion, and lack of transparency. The Commissioner outlined the following ways of mitigating risks: upholding EU digital legislation (AI Act, Digital Services Act); ratifying the Council of Europe Framework Convention on AI; conducting human rights assessments of algorithms (e.g., HUDERIA tool); ensuring humans remain in control of decisions; promoting digital literacy and access for vulnerable populations and engaging national human rights institutions and civil society.

On 18 March, the Commissioner and Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, issued an urgent [call for action](#) on the occasion of the Council of Europe High-Level Conference on Social Rights. In the face of Europe's losing fight against poverty, they underline that poverty is a form of disempowerment fuelled by institutional and social maltreatment, social stigma and daily humiliation. They stress that human rights should guide efforts to combat poverty. Rights are empowering; they change the relationship between service providers and clients, connecting duty-bearers with rights-holders. The current threats to democratic life are largely the result of the sentiment, within certain groups of the population, that they are being left behind and are not benefiting from general progress. The fight against poverty is therefore, ultimately, a fight for democracy. The Commissioner and UN Special Rapporteur welcomed the recognition that social rights are central to the New Democratic Pact for Europe and urged Council of Europe member states to move from mere recognition to robust, rights-based implementation.

On 20 March, the Commissioner [welcomed](#) the decision by France to extend the applicability of the Social Charter to its Overseas territories, as a significant step toward ensuring equality under the law, regardless of place of residence.

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL OF EUROPE INSTITUTIONS

4.1 System of the European Convention on Human Rights

In the reference period, the Commissioner reiterated the need to protect the ECHR in Council of Europe member states, underling the universality of human rights and the independence of the Court in the context of migration-related challenges. Thus, on 13 January, the Commissioner [addressed](#) these issues in a speech at Università Roma Tre in Italy. Reflecting on the human rights order built post-World War II under frameworks such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe, he warned that the system of democracy, rule of law, and human rights is under threat. In the context of "rule of law recession," and growing hostility toward international protections, the Commissioner argued that concerns around migration cannot justify weakening fundamental principles such as non-refoulement, judicial independence, and the universality of rights. He emphasised that while states hold primary responsibility, citizens must also defend democratic values. Furthermore, on 25 February, the Commissioner [addressed](#) via video message the 2nd extraordinary meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) on its crucial role in safeguarding the future of Europe's human rights system. The Commissioner called for discussions to be grounded in law rather than politics, for clear factual context and empirical examples to be provided to address member states' concerns, and for transparency to be ensured by making background information publicly available to clarify misunderstandings and support informed debate.

On 30 January, the Commissioner attended the Solemn hearing for the Opening of the Judicial Year of the European Court of Human Rights, during which the President of the Court and Prof. Dr. Stephan Harbarth, President of the German Federal Constitutional Court addressed representatives from the highest courts of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe and from local, national and international authorities.

On 12 February, the Commissioner submitted his [written observations](#) to the European Court of Human Rights on the case of *Kavala v. Türkiye (no.2)*. The case concerns the detention of Osman Kavala after the Court's judgment in *Kavala v. Turkey* delivered on 10 December 2019, and the criminal proceedings which resulted in his conviction to aggravated life imprisonment. On 25 March, the Commissioner [intervened](#) in the hearing of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in this case, encouraging the Court to consider the prosecution and detention of Osman Kavala in light of ongoing structural challenges facing human rights defenders in Türkiye. He noted that pressure on civil society in Türkiye continues, with reports indicating ongoing restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, and journalists, lawyers, opposition figures, and NGOs facing legal and administrative pressures. The Commissioner outlined concerns regarding the justice system, such as the lack of independence and impartiality of the judiciary, prolonged trials, overlapping criminal cases, and restrictions on lawyers' professional activities. Slowness in the Constitutional Court's review of individual applications and the non-implementation of some of its rulings exacerbate these problems. The Commissioner also spoke about systemic challenges, reiterating that legislative changes affecting judicial governance, misapplication of criminal and anti-terrorism laws, and failure to execute ECtHR judgments lie behind repeated human rights violations today. He emphasised that these structural issues are highly relevant in the *Kavala v. Türkiye (no 2)* case and encouraged the Court to take these observations into consideration.

4.2 Committee of Ministers

Exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on External Relations

On 10 February, the Commissioner had an informal meeting with the Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT), in Strasbourg. They exchanged on Council of Europe outreach and engagement beyond Europe.

Exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers Deputies

On 29 April, the Commissioner had an [exchange of views](#) with the Committee of Ministers' Deputies. In his introductory remarks, the Commissioner focused on his annual activity report 2025.

4.3 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Exchange of views with the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

On 29 January, the Commissioner had an [exchange of views](#) with the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, in Strasbourg. He presented his broad human rights mandate and his focused, field-based approach that emphasises law-based advocacy, collaboration, and prioritising marginalised communities and human rights defenders.

Meeting with PACE General Rapporteur on Asylum and Migration

On 29 January, the Commissioner met with Lord Michael German, PACE General Rapporteur on Asylum and Migration in Strasbourg to discuss European migration and asylum policies.

Meeting with a member of the Irish PACE Delegation

On 21 April, the Commissioner met with Senator Patricia Stephenson, member of PACE and of Ireland's Senate. They exchange on the human rights situation in Europe and on the system of the ECHR, particularly in the context of migration.

Presentation of Annual Activity Report 2025

On 22 April, the Commissioner presented his annual activity report 2025 to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He [warned](#) that Europe is undergoing a "change of era" that threatens human rights law, driven by rapid technological, social, and environmental shifts. He stressed the rising violence, war, and political rejection of human rights, particularly in migration management. The Commissioner highlighted Russia's war against Ukraine as Europe's greatest challenge, emphasising that any peace must prioritise justice and the rights of affected people. He also pointed to Europe's Roma and Travellers as facing severe discrimination and exclusion. Despite these challenges, he ended with a message of hope, urging Europe to recognize human rights as its greatest asset and act to protect them.

Joint meeting of PACE Monitoring Committee and PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

On 22 April, the Commissioner spoke at a joint meeting of PACE Monitoring Committee and Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Right, in Strasbourg.

Meeting with PACE rapporteurs on Georgia

On 23 April, the Commissioner met with Edite Estrela and Sabina Ćudić, PACE rapporteurs on Georgia. They discussed recent human rights developments in the country.

4.4 Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

On 31 March, the Commissioner [addressed](#) the 50th Session of the Congress in Strasbourg, during the plenary debate on 'Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine: A Strategic Approach to Supporting the Recovery and Reconstruction of Ukraine at Local and Regional Levels' (see *Priority areas of action: Impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on human rights*).

4.5 Others

On 20 January, the Commissioner met with the Heads of the Council of Europe Field Offices, in Strasbourg. They discussed ways to enhance cooperation in addressing human rights challenges across the Council of Europe area.

On 10 February, the Commissioner had an [exchange of views](#) with the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Strasbourg. He commended its crucial work in raising awareness of the human rights situation of national minorities and in advancing their protection.

5. EXTERNAL COOPERATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY

5.1 National Human Rights Structures

During the reporting period, the Commissioner made a country-specific intervention on national human rights structures in Italy (see *Country focus*). In addition, the Commissioner engaged with national human rights structures during his country visits and missions as well as in Strasbourg to discuss topical national human rights developments.

In February and March, the Commissioner held a series of meetings with national human rights structures and their networks to discuss current challenges to the integrity of the ECHR system. On 11 February, the Commissioner met online with Professor Rick Lawson, President of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. On 16 February, the Commissioner met online with Louise Holck, Chair of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions. On 3 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Martien Schotsmans, Director of the Federal Institute for Human Rights (FIRM/IFDH) of Belgium. On 11 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Liam Herrick, Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, in Strasbourg. On 12 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Dr Jarna Petman, Director of the Human Rights Centre of the Parliament of Finland. On 13 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with the Reinier van Zutphen, National Ombudsman of the Netherlands, in Strasbourg. They exchanged on current human rights challenges to the system of the ECHR (see *Country focus*). On 13 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Simona Drenik Bavdek, Human Rights Ombudsman of Slovenia, in Strasbourg. They exchanged on current human rights challenges.

On 13 March, the Commissioner delivered the [opening remarks](#) at the Council of Europe 'ON Forum: High-level conference with Ombudsperson institutions and National Human Rights Institutions', in Strasbourg. The Commissioner emphasised the value for NHRIs of collaboration with the European Court of Human Rights in implementing human rights mandates. He stressed the importance of cooperation in promoting human rights, grounded in the Court's legal framework and warned of growing threats, including conflicts, weakening respect for international law, and political pressures – especially around migration. The Commissioner warned against approaches that could undermine human rights, national courts, or the ECHR. He stressed that threats to human rights universality or judicial independence have wide-reaching societal consequences and that political narratives can drive real-world changes and concluded by reaffirming commitment to cooperation, partnership, and promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law across Europe.

On 22 April, the Commissioner delivered a video message to the 25th anniversary of the German Institute for Human Rights, in Berlin.

5.2 Cooperation with European and international organisations

Meeting with the European Union Commissioner for Enlargement

On 11 February, the Commissioner [met](#) with Marta Kos, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, in Strasbourg. They discussed the importance of having human rights at the core of the EU enlargement process and of Ukraine's peace processes and reconstruction.

Meeting with NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

On 14 February, the Commissioner met with Irene Fellin, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, in the margins of the 62nd Munich Security Conference. They discussed areas of mutual concern and explored future cooperation.

Meeting with the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament

On 24 February, the Commissioner [met](#) with Mounir Satouri, Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament (EP Droï) in Brussels. They discussed areas of mutual concern and shared resolve to stand with the people of Ukraine and to defend human rights across Europe.

Mission to Geneva

From 26 to 27 February, the Commissioner carried out a mission to Geneva to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation with partners from the United Nations and other international organisations. The aim of the mission was to discuss key human rights issues in Europe and identify avenues for closer cooperation. The Commissioner met with [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) Volker Türk; the [International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\) Secretary General](#), Doreen Bogdan-Martin; and the [President the ICRC](#), Mirjana Spoljaric Egger. He also met with the [Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy](#), Thomas Greminger; with as [Australia's Special Envoy for International Human Rights](#), Mark Dreyfus KC MP and with the Head of Europe and Eurasia at the [World Economic Forum](#), Andrew Caruana Galizia. The Commissioner also met with the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Nicolas Levrat, to discuss the human rights situation of Roma and Travellers. The Commissioner met Antje Leendertse, Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN in Geneva, to discuss current human rights issues in Europe.

Meeting with the Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service

On 2 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Olof Skoog, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels. They discussed integrating human rights into Ukraine's peacebuilding process, the human rights situation in Council of Europe member states, and strengthening EU action for democracy, civil society and forgotten people.

Meeting with the President of the European Economic and Social Committee

On 2 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Séamus Boland, President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels, to discuss the situation of civil society in Council of Europe member states. The conversation also focused on ways to empower civil society and ensure sustainable funding for its activities.

Meeting with the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU

On 2 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Ambassador Aingeal O'Donoghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU, in Brussels. They discussed ways of ensuring that human rights remain Europe's key strength and priorities of Ireland's upcoming EU Presidency.

Meeting with the EU Special Envoy for the Ukrainians in the European Union

On 10 March, the Commissioner met online with Ylva Johansson, EU Special Envoy for the Ukrainians in the European Union to discuss the situation of people displaced by the war from Ukraine to other European countries.

Meeting with the Head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

On 11 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Danielle Bell, Head of UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU), in Strasbourg. They discussed the ongoing situation in Ukraine, including attacks on civilian infrastructure and drone strikes.

Meeting with Deputy Managing Director of the European External Action Service

On 24 March, the Commissioner [met](#) with Stella Ronner, Deputy Managing Director of the of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Strasbourg. They discussed the need for human rights to guide peace processes and recovery of Ukraine as well as human rights and migration.

Meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

On 17 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Barham Salih, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. They discussed the protection of refugees as a European and global priority.

Meeting with the Director General of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development

On 17 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Susanne Raab, Director General of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. They discussed refugee protection challenges in Europe.

Meeting with the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights

On 18 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Kajsa Ollongren, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, to discuss human rights developments in Council of Europe member states.

Meeting with the United Nations High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 18 April, the Commissioner [met](#) with Christian Schmidt, UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. They discussed human rights developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Meeting with a Member of the European Parliament

On 30 April, the Commissioner met with Kathleen Funchion, member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. They discussed current human rights issues.

5.3 Other meetings

Meeting with Consul General of Morocco

On 5 January, the Commissioner met with Lalla Soumia Bouhamidi, Consul General of Morocco in Strasbourg. They discussed current human rights challenges including in relation to migration.

Wilton Park Annual Human Rights Conference

From 21 to 23 January, the Commissioner attended the 20th Wilton Park Annual Human Rights conference which focused on 'Human rights in a shifting world: broadening support, securing futures'. He [spoke](#) on a panel dedicated to 'Future-proofing rights: intergenerational dialogue' arguing that the transition into a new era requires protecting core human rights principles, such as universality, and strengthening key institutions like the UN and Council of Europe. The Commissioner stressed that civil society must be safeguarded, and young people's energy should be harnessed to support human rights efforts.

Meeting with Director of Amnesty International's European Institutions Office

On 2 February, the Commissioner met with Eve Geddie, Director of Amnesty International's European Institutions Office in Strasbourg, to discuss current human rights challenges.

Meeting with the Director of Liberty, United Kingdom

On 9 February, the Commissioner met with Akiko Hart, Director of Liberty United Kingdom, online. They exchanged views on the system of the ECHR and discussed issues relating to human rights and rule of law more broadly.

Meeting with the President of the European Forum Alpbach

On 13 February, the Commissioner met with Othmar Karas, President of the European Forum Alpbach, in the margins of the 62nd Munich Security Conference. They discussed the centrality of the Council of Europe regarding human rights on the continent.

Munich Security Conference 2026

On 13-15 February, the Commissioner [attended](#) the 62nd Munich Security Conference, where he advocated that durable European stability and a just, lasting peace depend fundamentally on a framework anchored in human rights and accountability. The Commissioner primary focus was the strategic integration of the "human dimension" into Ukraine peace processes. In that context, he met with the Deputy Head of the Office of the Ukrainian President, Ihor Zhovzhka, Ukrainian Member of Parliament and PACE member Oleksyi Goncharenko, and NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin. Throughout engagements, emphasis was placed on the principle that national security is not a separate interest but is best achieved by upholding the rule of law and a human rights-based approach. He sought to ensure that human rights were advanced as a foundational pillar of the emerging global order.

World Economic Forum's Partnering Against Corruption Initiative Community Meeting

On 23 March, the Commissioner [addressed](#) the World Economic Forum's Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI) Community Meeting, in Paris. The meeting took place at the OECD headquarters in the margins of the Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum (GACIF) 2026. Speaking in the opening panel discussion, he called for a better alignment between anti-corruption efforts and human rights due diligence.

5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum

From 17 to 19 March, the Commissioner attended the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, held under the theme of "Mapping Tomorrow, Managing Uncertainties" in Antalya, Türkiye. The Commissioner participated in a panel on the 'Global Refugee Protection System in the face of the Displacement Crisis' and [engaged](#) in dialogue with global leaders on today's most pressing challenges, with a view to ensure that people and their rights remain at the centre of all our efforts.

6. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION WORK

Media monitoring for this period recorded a total of 493 news mentions and 1,129 clips regarding the Commissioner's work. Key coverage focused on migration, digital technologies (social media bans), and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, alongside the human rights of LGBTI people, freedom of expression and association, and the human rights of Roma and Travellers.

Additionally, the media covered the memorandum on [Germany](#), the Shout Out [Regulate platforms, not children](#) and the Shout Out [Why Europe's return policies need human rights](#).

Among the main national and international media outlets covering the work of the Commissioner featured major news outlets such as: *AFP, Agence Europe, AgenSIR, AgerPress, ANSA, Associated Press, ArmInfo, ArmenPress, Avvenire, Balkan Insight, BBC, BETA, Civil Georgia, Computer Weekly, The Conversation UK, The Conversation ES, The Copenhagen Post, Courthouse News Service, Cyprus Mail, Dagens Nyheter, Danas, Deutschlandfunk, Der Standard, Die Zeit, DPA, DW, The Economist, EFE, Efimerida ton Syntakton, Ekathimerini, El Pais, EU Observer, Euractiv, Euronews, Evropeiskaya Pravda, Expres.mk, FENA, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Gazeta Wyborcza, Georgia Today, Haberler, Hromadske Radio, The Independent, The Irish Independent, The Irish Times, InfoMigrants, Irish Legal News, KNA, Kyiv Independent, Kyiv Post, La Croix, Legal Tribune Online, Libération, Lusa, The New York Times, Mediapart, Le Monde, MSN, MTA, N1 Info, Le Nouvel Obs, N-TV, Oslobodjenje, PAP, Pink News, Politico, Publico, Radio Moldova, RAI News, Reuters, RFI, Romea, RTÉ, RTL, Sarajevo Times, SDA/ATS, Sky News, Der Spiegel, STA, SwissInfo, Swedish Radio, Stern, T24, TAZ, The Guardian, Le Temps, To Vima, Turkish Minute, Ukrainskaya Pravda, Ukrinform, VOA, Vijesti, Yahoo news, ZDF.*

The Commissioner gave interviews to: *Agence Europe, Amnesty Press (Sweden), ANSA, Asahi Shimbun, Computer Weekly, EFE, EU Observer, La Libre Belgique, Le Taurillon, Just Access Podcast, Politico, Reuters, RFI, Swedish Public Radio, To Vima.*

The Commissioner placed an [OpEd](#) on social media bans in *Le Nouvel Obs* on 24 February, and sent a [letter](#) to the Editor of *The Economist* published on 16 April in response to their article “Heading off ECHRexit” dated 4 April 2026.

A total of 43 news items were published on the [website](#) over the course of four months. The site recorded 344,532 unique visitors and 568,250 page views.

A total of 129 posts were published across six social media channels: [BlueSky](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Mastodon](#) and [X](#). On X alone, these posts reached 182,409 impressions and attracted 898 new followers, maintaining a 5.5% engagement rate.

The Commissioner’s [LinkedIn](#) presence continued to expand, reaching 5,196 followers and securing more than 160,000 impressions and 3,551 reactions (a 8.9 % engagement rate). On [Instagram](#), he has 184 followers (+100 during the period) and gained 11,700 organic views.