

Enhancing the selection process of European Court
of Human Rights judges through multi-institutional dialogue

SEMINAR MARKING THE 15 YEARS OF THE ADVISORY PANEL'S WORK

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Interpretation and Application of Article 21(1) of the European Convention on Human
Rights: Criteria in Practice

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Good morning, and welcome to this thematic session. It is a pleasure to guide today's discussion as we examine how the three minimum eligibility conditions in Article 21(1) of the Convention are interpreted and applied.

Before we begin, let me warmly thank our distinguished panellists for joining this seminar marking the Advisory Panel's 15th anniversary. Having served as its Secretary for nearly five years, I retain a deep personal attachment to its mission, and I am particularly pleased to moderate this session.

Article 21 provides only broad signposts. Phrases such as "high moral character," "qualifications for high judicial office," and "jurisconsult of recognised competence" are far from self-explanatory.

These concepts did not emerge in isolation: the drafters drew them directly from Article 2 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, itself echoing the Statute of the Permanent Court.

Their deliberate openness has demanded sustained care and informed judgment in applying Article 21(1) over the years.

This session focuses on how the Advisory Panel has met that challenge—how it has interpreted these open-textured criteria and ensured they serve the Convention's standards of judicial excellence.

Through this exchange, I hope we not only highlight the value of the Panel's work but also help bring sharper visibility to its role.

We are fortunate to have with us speakers uniquely placed to deepen our understanding. I very much look forward to their insights and to our discussion, including questions from the audience.

I now have the honour of giving the floor to our main speaker, Mr Paul Mahoney, former Chair of the Advisory Panel and former Judge and Registrar of the European Court of Human Rights.

Sir, the floor is yours.