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THE EXECUTION OF JUDGMENTS INVOLVING FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION: THE IMPACT ON ASSOCIATIONS AND DEFENDERS

Updated Thematic Study
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This study updates a thematic study originally published in March 2022 ([“the 2022 study”](#)), which considered the challenges associated with the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”) involving freedom of association. The Expert Council on NGO Law (“the Expert Council”) decided to prepare this update (“the updated study”) given the continuing challenges associated with the full execution of such judgments.
2. The updated study considers both the adoption and implementation by member States of specific and general measures to execute the Court’s judgments and the approaches taken by the Committee of Ministers in its dialogue with them. Where applicable, it also considers the role of the Court in matters relating to the execution of judgments.
3. In particular, the updated study considers what has transpired with those judgments which the Expert Council had already reported upon in the 2022 study. Many of those judgments which had already been pending execution for multiple years at the time of the 2022 study, remain pending today. It also considers newer judgments which have been decided by the Court or submitted to the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of execution after the publication of the 2022 study.
4. Like the 2022 study, the judgments now being considered mainly involve findings of a violation of the right to freedom of association under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (“the Convention”). Article 11 cases involving trade unions and political parties were not examined given their special characteristics. Several judgments are also examined in which violations of Article 9, in light of Article 11, were found. The updated study also considers several cases pertaining to human rights organisations or defenders, which, although raising issues connected to freedom of association, the Court did not address specifically compliance with Article 11 but instead found a violation of other Articles of the Convention in conjunction with Article 18 (limitation on use of restrictions on rights).
5. A list of all the judgments considered is annexed.¹

II. OVERVIEW OF THE JUDGMENTS CONSIDERED

A. The 2022 study

6. The 2022 study considered 38 judgments which were then before the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of their execution. These cases involved Azerbaijan (12); Bulgaria (8); Russia (7); Türkiye (4); Greece (4); former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2); Hungary (1).
7. Of those cases,

¹ Full citations for these judgments are provided in the Annex.

16 involved human rights or social justice non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”);²
11 involved religious NGOs;³ and
11 involved organisations connected to minority groups.⁴

B. New judgments subsequent to the 2022 study

8. In addition to the 38 judgments which had already been considered in 2022 (and are now further examined), the updated study considers 26 new judgments involving Russia (13); Azerbaijan (2); Bulgaria (2); Türkiye (2); Austria (1); Armenia (1); Greece (1); Latvia (1); Lithuania (1); Moldova (1); Poland (1).

9. These consist of:

16 judgments involving human rights or social justice NGOs;⁵
8 judgments involving religious NGOs;⁶ and
2 judgments involving organisations connected to minority groups.⁷

² Jafarov & Ors v Azerbaijan; Ramzanova & Ors v Azerbaijan; Ismayilov v Azerbaijan; Aliyev & Ors v Azerbaijan; Nasibova v Azerbaijan; Zhdanov & Ors v Russia; Tebieti Mühafize Cemiyeti and Israfilov v Azerbaijan; Adana Tayad v Türkiye; Association of Solidarity with the Oppressed v Türkiye; Çetinkaya v Türkiye; Kavala v Türkiye; Azizov and Novruzlu v Azerbaijan; Yunusova and Yunusov v Azerbaijan (No. 2); Aliyev v Azerbaijan; Mammadli v Azerbaijan; Democracy and Human Rights Resource Centre and Mustafayev v Azerbaijan.

³ Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army v Russia; Church of Scientology of St Petersburg & Ors v Russia; Kimlya & Ors v Russia; Church of Scientology Moscow v Russia; Magyar Keresztény Mennonita Egyház & Ors v Hungary; Bektashi Community & Ors v former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; "Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese (Greek-Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese of the Peć Patriarchy)" v former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Jehovah's Witnesses of Moscow v Russia; Biblical Centre of the Chuvash Republic v Russia; Genov v Bulgaria; Metodiev & Ors v Bulgaria.

⁴ House of Macedonian Civilisation & Ors v Greece; Emin & Ors v Greece; Bekir-Ousta & Ors v Greece; United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden & Ors v Bulgaria; United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden & Ors v Bulgaria (No. 2); United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden & Ors v Bulgaria (No. 3); Yordan Ivanov & Ors v Bulgaria; Macedonian Club for Ethnic Tolerance in Bulgaria and Radonov v Bulgaria; Islam-Ittihad Association & Ors v Azerbaijan; Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis & Ors v Greece; Vasilev and Society of the Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria Victims of the Communist Terror v Bulgaria.

⁵ Andrey Rylkov Foundation & Ors v Russia; Anti-corruption Foundation (FBK) & Ors v Russia; Bakradze v Georgia; Ecodefence & Ors v Russia; Election Monitoring Centre & Ors v Azerbaijan; Imranova and Ahmadova v Azerbaijan; Kavala v Türkiye (No. 2) (Grand Chamber); Kobaliya & Ors v Russia; Kogan and Ors v Russia; Mariya Alekhina & Ors v Russia (No. 2); Preobrazheniye Rossii & Ors v. Russia; Tsentri Prosvetitelnykh I Issledovatel'skikh Programmi v. Russia; Tyumen Regional Branch of All-Russia Movement 'For Human Rights' & Ors v Russia; Vladimir Regional Public Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons 'Sodeystviye' v Russia; Yefimov and Youth Human Rights Group v Russia; Yüksel Yalçinkaya v Türkiye.

⁶ AO Falun Dafa & Ors v Moldova; Ancient Baltic Religious Association "Romuva" v Lithuania; Bulgarian Orthodox Old Calendar Church & Ors v Bulgaria; Christian Religious Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses in the NKR v Armenia; Föderation Der Aleviten Gemeinden In Österreich v Austria; Independent Orthodox Church & Zahariev v Bulgaria; Markin & Ors v Russia; Taganrog LRO & Ors v Russia.

⁷ Association of People of Silesian nationality (in liquidation) v Poland; Sagir & Ors v Greece.

III. ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE JUDGMENTS AND THEIR EXECUTION

10. Like the 2022 study, the main issues canvassed in the judgments and their execution are:

- the refusal to register, and significant delays to register associations;
- the requirement to re-register associations;
- the involuntary dissolution of associations; and
- arbitrary detention and other breaches of the rights of human rights defenders to punish and silence them for their membership in human rights organisations. These issues are considered in turn.

A. Refusal to register, and significant delays in registering associations

11. 25 of the 38 judgments reviewed for the 2022 study concerned the unjustified refusal to register or significant delays in registering associations taken to constitute a *de facto* failure to register. These judgments tended to hold that the actions of the States concerned constituted an interference with the exercise of the right to freedom of association (and/or in some cases freedom of religion) which, even in those cases where the interference was prescribed by law or could be said to pursue a legitimate aim, the interferences could not be said to be necessary in a democratic society, nor could the refusal to register be seen to serve a pressing social need.
12. Of these, the longest standing unexecuted judgments (and which continued to be unexecuted at the time of writing in 2026) concern the refusal to register associations involving minority groups, such as *United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Ors v. Bulgaria* (pending 20 years); *Ramazanov and Ors v. Azerbaijan* (pending 19 years); *Bekir-Ousta and Ors v. Greece* (pending 19 years) and *Emin and Ors v. Greece* (pending 18 years). Others among the longest standing unexecuted judgments concern the refusal to register religious associations, such as *Church of Scientology Moscow v. Russia* (pending 19 years) and *Kimlya v. Russia* (18 years).
11. Many of the “refusal to register” judgments concern identical or similar facts or issues, demonstrating that some States have not (adequately or at all) amended their practices to guarantee non-recurrence following the issuance of judgments by the Court. In some cases, following the finding of a violation of freedom of association by the Court, the same or similar applicants re-attempting to register the association in line with the judgment are met again with a refusal to register on the same or similar grounds. Also, some States have violated freedom of association in multiple cases involving different applicants seeking to register diverse associations, but the refusals to register follow similar patterns and are for much the same reasons, and do not take full account of the Court’s rulings in earlier cases⁸.

⁸ E.g., *Mariya Alekhina & Ors v. Russia* (No. 2).

12. This “repeat” refusal to register is particularly evident in cases involving associations seeking to promote minority ethnic or religious rights in Azerbaijan,⁹ Bulgaria,¹⁰ Greece,¹¹ and Russia.¹² Most of these judgments remained pending at the time of writing. Crucial to the execution of such judgments are the structural and institutional measures put in place by States to address the systemic or structural problems exposed by the case and guarantee non-recurrence.
13. Controversially, however, following bilateral meetings with the authorities, the Committee of Ministers decided to close its examination of five of the longest standing “refusal to register” cases concerning Azerbaijan, following individual measures undertaken by the authorities.¹³ Any outstanding general measures required in response to the shortcomings found in those judgments would continue to be examined within the framework of the lead case only.
14. There have been multiple new “repeat” refusal to register cases involving associations in Azerbaijan, which have now been incorporated into the *Ramazanova* group of cases under the Committee of Ministers’ enhanced procedure.¹⁴ For example, in the *Imranova and Ahmadova* case, the competent authorities refused to register the association “Support to Development of Media and Democracy – Public Association,” a decision which the Court determined was arbitrary and not “prescribed by law,” and accordingly, a violation of Article 11.¹⁵
15. A new refusal to register case involving associations seeking to promote minority ethnic rights has also been decided against Greece.
16. Thus, in the *Sagir* case, the domestic courts had refused to register the “Cultural Association of Turkish women of the Prefecture of Xanthi,” on the basis that no Turkish minority had been recognised by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. The Court determined that no legitimate aim, such as a threat to public order, had been identified and that an association’s proposed name could not by itself justify non-registration. As such, the justifications for the failure to register were not relevant and sufficient and did not pursue a “pressing social need.”¹⁶ Importantly, even though the judgment is relatively

⁹ *Jafarov & Ors v Azerbaijan*; *Ramazanova & Ors v Azerbaijan*; *Ismayilov v Azerbaijan*; *Aliyev & Ors v Azerbaijan*; *Nasibova v Azerbaijan*; *Nasibova v Azerbaijan*.

¹⁰ *United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Ors v Bulgaria*; *United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Ors v Bulgaria* (No. 2); *United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Others v Bulgaria* (No. 3); *Yordan Ivanov and Others v Bulgaria*; *Macedonian Club for Ethnic Tolerance in Bulgaria and Radonov v Bulgaria*; *Society of the Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria Victims of the Communist Terror v. Bulgaria*; *Genov v Bulgaria*; *Metodiev and Others v Bulgaria*.

¹¹ *House of Macedonian Civilisation & Ors v Greece*; *Emin & Ors v Greece*; *Bekir-Ousta & Ors v Greece*.

¹² *Zhdanov and Others v Russia*.

¹³ Execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, Five cases against Azerbaijan, Resolution CM/ResDH(2023)55 (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 April 2023 at the 1462nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies).

¹⁴ 1563rd mtg (9-11 June 2026) (DH) - H46-45 *Ramazanova & Ors group v. Azerbaijan* (Application No. 44363/02) [CM/Notes/1563/H46-45] is a Leading Case for 18 Repetitive Cases.

¹⁵ *Imranova and Ahmadova v Azerbaijan*. See similarly, *Election Monitoring Centre & Ors v Azerbaijan*.

¹⁶ *Sagir & Ors v Greece*.

new (from 2025), the Committee of Ministers has grouped it with the longstanding *Bekir-Ousta* group of cases under its enhanced procedure.¹⁷

17. There have also been new refusal to register cases involving religious organisations. In *Bulgarian Orthodox Old Calendar Church*, Bulgarian courts refused to register a church adhering to the Old Calendarist variant of Eastern Orthodoxy owing to the similarity of its name with that of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which was already recognised by law. The European Court determined that this amounted to an unlawful and unjustified limitation on the right of the Bulgarian Orthodox Old Calendar Church and its adherents to manifest their religion. The refusal to register was not “necessary in a democratic society,” and consequently was determined to have resulted in a breach of Article 9 read in the light of Article 11.¹⁸ Similarly, in *Ancient Baltic Religious Association “Romuva” v. Lithuania*, the Court held that it was not an objective and reasonable justification to refuse to recognise formally a religious association on the basis that to recognise it could cause tensions with the majority Christian population.¹⁹
18. The Court has begun to indicate in its judgments the type of measures that might be taken to put an end to violations of Article 11, or Article 9 in light of Article 11, particularly where the situations giving rise to violations are systemic.
19. Thus, in *Sagir*, the Court indicated that:

without prejudice to any general measures that may be required for the prevention of or for the affording of redress in respect of other similar violations, the reopening of the proceedings – if requested – would be the most appropriate way of putting an end to the violation found in the present case and of affording redress to the applicants.²⁰

20. This call was echoed in the 2026 decision of the Committee of Ministers, where the Committee expressed ‘again hope that any such request for reopening would be assessed by the domestic courts with full regard to the Court’s finding.’²¹ Among other statements, it also indicated that it would further consider the matter in its December 2026 meeting and that

in the absence of tangible progress by then, to consider taking new action at that meeting to support the efforts of the Greek authorities to abide by their obligations under Article 46 of the Convention deriving from these judgments.²²

¹⁷ 1545th meeting (2-4 December 2025) (DH) - H46-18 *Bekir-Ousta and Others group v. Greece* (Application No. 35151/05).

¹⁸ *Bulgarian Orthodox Old Calendar Church and Ors v. Bulgaria*. See similarly, *Independent Orthodox Church & Zahariev v Bulgaria*; *Föderation Der Aleviten Gemeinden In Österreich v Austria*; *Christian Religious Organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the NKR v Armenia*.

¹⁹ *Ancient Baltic Religious Association “Romuva” v Lithuania*.

²⁰ *Sagir & Ors v Greece*, para 65.

²¹ 1563rd meeting (9-11 June 2026) (DH) - H46-15 *Bekir-Ousta and Others group v. Greece* (Application No. 35151/05), para. 4.

²² *Ibid*, para 8.

B. Requirements to re-register associations

21. In the 2022 study, the Expert Council reviewed several cases where associations were required to re-register to comply with new legislation, and the subsequent difficulties associations have experienced related to the re-registration processes, which resulted in findings of violations of the Convention.
22. Judgments involving religious communities in Hungary that had lost their status as churches following the entry into force in 2012 of the Hungarian Church Act of 2012 have now been executed with supervision closed by the Committee of Ministers in 2024. Just satisfaction had been paid to each of the applicants and under the 2018 Church Act, all applicants obtained *ipso iure* the status of religious associations and could apply to obtain the status of registered or incorporated church.²³
23. Similarly, judgments concerning the inability of certain groups to re-register as religious entities in North Macedonia following the introduction of new legislation in 2007²⁴ have now been executed and supervision by the Committee of Ministers closed in 2024. Just satisfaction was paid to the entities concerned, who were also able to be re-registered in accordance with section 400 of the Civil Proceedings Act, which provides a possibility for organisations to apply to reopen proceedings following a judgment of the European Court finding a violation.²⁵ One entity was able to be registered following a merger with a registered association, another association was able to be registered under a modified name, and awareness-raising activities and a change in the caselaw were deemed sufficient to address the requirements for general measures of execution.²⁶
24. The remaining refusal to re-register cases pertain to Russia. Outstanding judgments which required organisations to re-register in accordance with the Religions Act (1997)²⁷ remain pending, reflecting a broader pattern of non-execution following the cessation of Russia's Council of Europe membership as from 16 March 2022. This is despite Russia's continuing obligations to implement judgments of the Court in accordance with Article 58 of the European Convention on Human Rights.²⁸

²³ Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)372, Execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, *Magyar Keresztény Mennonita Egyház and Others against Hungary* (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 December 2024 at the 1515th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

²⁴ *Bektashi Community and Others v the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; "Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese (Greek-Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese of the Peć Patriarchy)" v "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"*.

²⁵ Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)310, Execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, Two cases against North Macedonia (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 December 2024 at the 1514th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

²⁶ 1514th meeting (December 2024) (DH) - Action Report (20/09/2024) - Communication from North Macedonia concerning the group of cases of Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese v. "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (Application No. 3532/07), paras. 33, 55, 63-74, read in conjunction with Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)310, *ibid*.

²⁷ *Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army v Russia; Church of Scientology Moscow v Russia; Kimlya and Others v. Russia*. See also, *Church of Scientology of St Petersburg and Others v Russia*.

²⁸ See, Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against the Russian Federation: measures required in the pending cases, CM/Inf/DH(2026)5 (11 March 2026) para. 172.

C. The involuntary dissolution of associations

25. A refusal to register or re-register an association can result in the involuntary dissolution of the association. In addition, such dissolution may be the consequence of overly onerous registration processes. It can also occur for other reasons and may constitute a separate violation of the right to freedom of association. The Court has repeatedly recognised that the dissolution of an association is an extremely severe measure entailing significant consequences which can only be tolerated in very serious circumstances.²⁹
26. Of the involuntary dissolution cases that were pending in 2022, all cases involving Russia remained pending at the time of writing in 2026.³⁰
27. Additional judgments are now pending before the Committee of Ministers related to the involuntary dissolution of Russian associations, including cases involving the dissolution of human rights and anti-corruption organisations which were not understood by the Court to be “necessary in a democratic society”.³¹ Involuntary dissolutions were also improperly justified on the basis of extremism legislation or the unjustified designation of certain organisations as “foreign agents”³² or “undesirable.”³³ One organisation was dissolved because the organisation did not expel its founder, who had been suspected of an extremist offence and thereby the association’s conduct was said to demonstrate extremist activities in contravention of the Suppression of Extremism Act which the Court held to be an arbitrary decision incompatible with the “quality of law” requirements.³⁴ Other organizations were dissolved by using the excessively broad wording of the extremism legislation.³⁵ The Committee of Ministers has determined *inter alia* that to execute the judgments, Russia must repeal the offensive legislation and revoke decisions penalising and dissolving the concerned organisations.³⁶
28. The picture is mixed with respect to other involuntary dissolution cases.
29. For Azerbaijan, for the *Tebieti Mühafize Cəmiyyəti and İsrailov* judgment, which involved the dissolution of an environmental association on the basis that it was carrying out activities outside its charter and prohibited by law (which the European Court determined was a disproportionate restriction of the Applicant’s rights under Article 11),³⁷ the Committee of Ministers closed its examination of the execution of the

²⁹ See, e.g., *Adana Tayad v Türkiye*; *Yefimov & Youth Human Rights Group v Russia*; *A.O. Falun Dafa & Ors v Moldova*.

³⁰ *Jehovah’s Witnesses of Moscow v. Russia*; *Biblical Centre of the Chuvash Republic*.

³¹ See, e.g., *Tyumen Regional Branch of All-Russia Movement ‘For Human Rights’ & Ors v Russia*; *Vladimir Regional Public Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons ‘Sodeystviye’ v Russia*.

³² *Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) & Ors v Russia*; *Ecodefence & Ors v Russia*; *Kobaliya & Ors v Russia*.

³³ *Andre Rylkov Foundation v Russia*.

³⁴ *Yefimov & Youth Human Rights Group v Russia*.

³⁵ *Taganrog LRO & Ors v Russia*; *Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) & Ors v Russia*.

³⁶ See, Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against the Russian Federation: measures required in the pending cases, CM/Inf/DH(2026)5 (11 March 2026) para. 195.

³⁷ *Tebieti Mühafize Cəmiyyəti and İsrailov v Azerbaijan*.

judgment in 2023 following the registration of the association concerned, though wider challenges associated with the execution by Azerbaijan of general measures remained pending.

30. This closure of the Committee of Ministers' supervision coincided with its closure of several "refusal to register" judgments (discussed in section III.A of this updated study, above), with the general measures to continue to be considered as part of the supervision of the *Ramazanova* group of judgments.³⁸ The practice of closing cases in which individual measures have been taken, while continuing to examine the general measures required in other cases, is consistent with a well-established practice.
31. In contrast, in *Islam-Ittihad Association and Others v Azerbaijan*, which involved the dissolution of an association on the basis that it was unlawfully engaging in religious activities,³⁹ the matter remains pending before the Committee of Ministers as it remains unclear whether the association was able to be registered, following proceedings before the Supreme Court.⁴⁰
32. In *Election Monitoring Centre and Others v Azerbaijan*, where the Court determined that the dissolution of the Centre 'did not meet the lawfulness requirement of Article 11, only seemingly pursued a legitimate aim, and was not "necessary in a democratic society"',⁴¹ execution is monitored by the Committee of Ministers as part of a group of 18 repetitive cases.
33. For judgments involving Türkiye, the 2020 *Adana Tayad* judgment (concerning the dissolution of the "Association for Mutual Aid and Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners and Convicts in Adana" on the grounds of the purported illegal activities of certain members of the association's board of directors, while the judgments handed down in the proceedings relating to those offences were not yet final) remains pending before the Committee of Ministers, the government having failed to supply an action plan as to how it intended to execute the judgment as of the time of writing in 2026.⁴² The Izmir Bar Association has called upon the Committee of Ministers to monitor the execution of this judgment and the wider group of cases under the Committee's enhanced procedure.⁴³
34. In contrast, the Committee of Ministers closed its supervision of the execution of the *Association of Solidarity with the Oppressed* judgment, following the execution of individual measures (general measures would continue to be supervised as part of the

³⁸ Resolution CM/ResDH(2023)55, Five cases against Azerbaijan (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 April 2023 at the 1462nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*).

³⁹ *Islam-Ittihad Association and Others v Azerbaijan*.

⁴⁰ H/Exec(2026)5, Memorandum - Ramazanova and Others group of cases v. Azerbaijan (Application No. 44363/02).

⁴¹ *Election Monitoring Centre and Others v Azerbaijan*, para. 101.

⁴² Status of execution: [https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/#/%22sort%22:\[%22execdocumenttypesorting%20ascending,execdocumentreferencsorting%20descending%22\],%22execidentifier%22:\[%22004-56203%22\]\]](https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/#/%22sort%22:[%22execdocumenttypesorting%20ascending,execdocumentreferencsorting%20descending%22],%22execidentifier%22:[%22004-56203%22]]).

⁴³ 1577th meeting (December 2026) (DH) - Rule 9.2 – Communication from an NGO (Izmir Bar Association) (18/09/2026) in the group of cases of *Adana Tayad v Türkiye* (Application No. 59835/10), Part VII.

Adana Tayad supervision).⁴⁴ A similar approach has been taken by the Committee of Ministers with respect to its supervision of the *Çetinkaya* judgment (supervision was closed in 2023 following the execution of individual measures; supervision of general measures was passed on as part of the *Kara v Türkiye* supervision).⁴⁵

35. The *Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis & Ors* 2007 judgment concerning Greece remains pending execution before the Committee of Ministers. The association was ordered dissolved because its mandate to preserve and promote the culture of the “Turks of Western Thrace” went counter to public policy.⁴⁶ The Court determined that the dissolution violated Article 11. In its June 2026 decision, the Committee of Ministers welcomed the planned amendments to the Greek Civil Code aimed at facilitating execution of the judgments and decided to resume examination of this group of cases in December 2026, and, ‘in the absence of tangible progress by then, to consider taking new action at that meeting to support the efforts of the Greek authorities to abide by their obligations under Article 46 of the Convention deriving from these judgments.’⁴⁷
36. The Committee of Ministers has already adopted robust decisions and interim resolutions and it is unclear what new action the Committee of Ministers is contemplating to take. The Greek Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe indicated in October 2026 that:
- during the course of November and at the latest by Monday, 30 November 2026, the Greek authorities will submit to the Department for the Execution of ECtHR Judgments, in the existing spirit of cooperation and understanding, the final draft of the relevant legislative provisions amending the Civil Code, together with the accompanying Explanatory Report.⁴⁸
37. However, the Applicants have expressed doubts whether the planned reforms will resolve the issue of non-recognition of the Turkish Union of Xanthi, which had already been dissolved, or result in the recognition of the other associations.⁴⁹
38. Also, the 2024 *Association of People of Silesian Nationality (in liquidation) v Poland* judgment raises almost identical issues to *Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis*. The organisation was forced to dissolve because the reference to “Silesian nationality” in its name could constitute a threat to public order. This was deemed by the Court to be an irrelevant and insufficient consideration which did not pursue a pressing social need.⁵⁰ An action

⁴⁴ Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)150, Association of Solidarity with the Oppressed against *Türkiye* (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 July 2024 at the 1503rd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies).

⁴⁵ Resolution CM/ResDH(2023)467, Execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, *Çetinkaya* against *Türkiye*, (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 December 2023 at the 1484th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies).

⁴⁶ *Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis and Others v Greece*.

⁴⁷ 1563rd meeting, 9-11 June 2026 (DH), H46-15 Bekir-Ousta and Others group v. Greece (Application No. 35151/05).

⁴⁸ 1577th meeting December 2026) (DH) - Rule 8.2a - Communication from the authorities (05/10/2026) concerning the group of cases of Bekir-Ousta and Others v. Greece (Application No. 35151/05).

⁴⁹ 1563rd meeting (June 2026) (DH) - Rule 9.1 - Communication from the applicants (09/04/2026) in the cases of Bekir-Ousta and Others, Emin and Others and *Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis* and Others v. Greece (Applications No. 35151/05, 34144/05, 26698/05) (Bekir-Ousta and Others group).

⁵⁰ *Association of People of Silesian Nationality (in liquidation) v Poland*, paras. 54-56.

report filed in March 2025 by the Polish government indicated that a request made by the Applicant organization to register was subsequently rejected on formal grounds because it was filed with the wrong form; there has been no further applications. The Government's position is that this should be sufficient to demonstrate that it has taken the necessary steps to execute the judgment as the Applicant association was properly informed of what further steps it would need to take but has not taken them.⁵¹ The matter remains pending.

D. Violation of the rights of human rights defenders to punish and silence them for their membership in associations and impede the functioning of the associations

39. The 2022 study reviewed cases involving human rights defenders who had been detained or their actions otherwise criminalised with the ulterior purpose of silencing them and the associations for which they work, thereby breaching Article 18 of the Convention (limitation of restricted rights for an ulterior purpose) in conjunction with other rights. Cases reviewed in that study pertained to Azerbaijan⁵² and Türkiye.⁵³ In several of these cases, the Court decided, pursuant to Article 46, to indicate individual and general measures to be taken by the Government concerned.⁵⁴
40. At the time of writing in 2026, the execution of judgments involving Article 18 by both countries remained stalled.
41. In the case of Azerbaijan, a group of like cases was closed in 2020 and 2021 by the Committee of Ministers following the Committee's assessment that individual measures had been adequately complied with upon the release of the applicants concerned from detention, with general measures continuing to be monitored under the enhanced procedure through other cases.⁵⁵ The failure to execute the recommended general measures has arguably contributed to new incidents of retaliatory charges, most recently the conviction of Anar Mammadli, in which the criminal court took into consideration his prior criminal conviction (which the Committee of Ministers had repeatedly requested to be quashed) as an 'aggravating circumstance.'⁵⁶

⁵¹ 1531st meeting (June 2025) (DH) - Action Report (19/03/2025) - Communication from Poland concerning the case of Association of People of Silesian Nationality (in liquidation) v. Poland (Application No. 26821/17).

⁵² *Aliyev v Azerbaijan*; *Azizov & Novruzlu v Azerbaijan*; *Democracy and Human Rights Resource Centre & Mustafayev v Azerbaijan*; *Mammadli v Azerbaijan*; *Ilgar Mammadov v Azerbaijan* (Grand Chamber); *Rashad Hasanov & Ors v Azerbaijan*; *Yunusova & Yunusov v Azerbaijan* (No. 2).

⁵³ *Kavala v Türkiye*.

⁵⁴ E.g., *Aliyev v Azerbaijan*, paras. 226, 227; *Kavala v Türkiye*.

⁵⁵ *Ilgar Mammadov v Azerbaijan & 2 Other Cases*, Res'n 15172/13, 919/15, 69981/14, 1 September 2020; *Rashad Hasanov & Ors v Azerbaijan*, 48653/13, Res': 30 November 2021; *Natig Jafarov v Azerbaijan*, 64581/16, Res'n: 14 September 2021. See, Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2026)135, Mammadli group of cases against Azerbaijan (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 June 2026 at the 1563rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

⁵⁶ 1569th meeting (September 2026) (DH) - Rule 9.1 -Communication from the applicant's representative (09/09/2026) in the group of cases of Mammadli v. Azerbaijan (Application No. 47145/14).

42. In Türkiye, Osman Kavala remains detained since October 2017 despite the absence of evidence to support a reasonable suspicion that he had committed an offence. The Court determined that his arrest and lengthy detention served the ulterior purpose of silencing him and creating a chilling effect on civil society and were 'likely to have a dissuasive effect on the work of human-rights defenders' (para 232), and pursuant to Article 46 of the Convention, ordered him to be released immediately from detention.⁵⁷ As there had been no progress to release him, the Committee of Ministers - following its adoption of a significant number of decisions and interim resolutions - referred the non-execution of the judgment to the Court. The Grand Chamber delivered its *Kavala (infringement judgment)* on 11 July 2022 where it was determined that Türkiye had failed to fulfil its obligation to execute the initial judgment.⁵⁸
43. In the *Kavala (No. 2)* judgment of 25 August 2026, the Grand Chamber found additional violations concerning Mr Kavala's continued detention following the Court's initial 2019 judgment and the ensuing criminal proceedings and conviction in 2022. These, it had found, had been arbitrary and motivated by the ulterior purpose of punishing him for his advocacy in violation of Article 18 in conjunction with other provisions.⁵⁹
44. As for individual measures, the Grand Chamber indicated that Mr Kavala's conviction needed to be regarded as null and void, and he needed to be released from detention at the earliest possible date. As to general measures, the Court focused on measures intended to strengthen institutional safeguards related to the independence of the judiciary and procedural safeguards intended to ensure that criminal proceedings are initiated and conducted in strict compliance with the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality, and not for ulterior purposes. It also held that there was a need to adopt measures to guarantee a genuine prospect for conditional release from detention.⁶⁰
45. Other Article 18 cases which involve measures taken to impede human rights work and freedom of association include *Kogan and Others v Russia*, where the applicant's residence permit was revoked in violation of her right to family life, ostensibly for the ulterior purpose of impeding human rights work and producing a chilling effect on her colleagues or of silencing other persons whom she represented and who claimed to be victims of human rights violations in Russia.⁶¹ Similarly, in *Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) and Others v Russia*, the mass search of homes and offices of persons and entities associated with the foundation in violation of Article 8, together with the arbitrary freezing of bank accounts, arbitrary seizure of funds during searches, unjustified designation of the foundation as a foreign agent and as an extremist organisation and its ensuing de-registration in violation of freedom of association were held by the Court to be part of a concerted effort and ulterior purpose to eliminate the democratic opposition associated with Aleksey Navalnyy.⁶²

⁵⁷ *Kavala v. Türkiye*.

⁵⁸ *Kavala (infringement judgment)*.

⁵⁹ *Kavala (No. 2)*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, paras. 307-315.

⁶¹ *Kogan & Ors v Russia*.

⁶² *Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) & Ors v Russia*.

46. In *Kogan*, the Committee of Ministers indicated that the appropriate individual measures would be to ensure payment of just satisfaction and to reconsider granting a residence permit to the applicant. As regards general measures, it was necessary to amend the procedure for revoking residence permits to prevent decisions from being taken based on secret reports. General measures associated with the violation of Article 18 concerned measures to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and to prevent malicious state-sponsored media campaigns.⁶³ At the time of writing, the Committee of Ministers had not yet pronounced itself on the most appropriate way for Russia to execute the *Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK)* judgment, though the monitoring of its execution will be undertaken as part of the *Navalnyy and Ofitserov v. Russia* group of cases.

IV. ASPECTS OF EXECUTION

A. Individual measures

47. Individual measures should put the applicants, to the extent possible, in the position in which they would have been had the requirements of the Convention not been disregarded. In exercising their choice of individual measures, the respondent State must bear in mind their primary aim of achieving *restitutio in integrum*.⁶⁴
48. While the Court has only rarely indicated specific individual measures in its judgments in accordance with Article 46 of the Convention and even more rarely in freedom of association cases, this is slowly changing.
49. However, it has been prepared to indicate individual measures ‘where the nature of the violation found is such as to leave no real choice as to the measures required to remedy it.’⁶⁵
50. Thus, beyond the Article 18 cases discussed above which connect to freedom of association but involve other violations including protracted arbitrary detention for an ulterior purpose, the Court has indicated specific individual measures in a new freedom of association judgment involving the refusal to register the “Cultural Association of Turkish women of the Prefecture of Xanthi,” a case which repeats violations identified in earlier judgments. Thus, in *Sagir v Greece*, the Court determined in accordance with Article 46 that the appropriate remedy would be to reopen the proceedings to register the association.⁶⁶ This holding was thereafter used by the Committee of Ministers in its recommendations to Greece.⁶⁷

⁶³ 1507th meeting (17-19 September 2024) (DH) - H46-29 *Kogan and Others* (Application No. 54003/20) and *Kutayev* (Application No. 17912/15) v. Russia.

⁶⁴ *Ilgar Mammadov v Azerbaijan* (Grand Chamber), Appl no. 15172/13, 29 May 2019, para. 150.

⁶⁵ *Kavala v. Türkiye*, para. 239.

⁶⁶ *Sagir & Ors v Greece*, paras. 64, 65.

⁶⁷ 1563rd meeting (9-11 June 2026) (DH) - H46-15 *Bekir-Ousta and Others group v. Greece* (Application No. 35151/05), para. 8.

51. The Committee of Ministers has remained consistent with respect to its consideration of individual measures in refusal to register, delayed registration and dissolution cases, with all identified measures aimed at enabling associations to become registered promptly should they wish and paying just satisfaction if ordered by the Court. Violations against defenders for an ulterior purpose have also tended to require restitution, such as the release of persons arbitrarily detained from detention, as well as the quashing of convictions and erasure from their criminal records and the elimination of all other consequences of the criminal charges brought against them,⁶⁸ or the reinstatement of a residency permit,⁶⁹ as appropriate.
52. With respect to cases concerning the Russian Federation, despite the lack of engagement regarding the execution of judgments after having ceased to be a party to the Convention, the Committee of Ministers has continued its examination of pending cases in accordance with Article 46 of the Convention. The Committee of Ministers has implemented a strategy of indicating the measures required to address the violations determined by the Court.⁷⁰ It has also transmitted decisions to United Nations bodies with which the Russian Federation continues to interact.⁷¹

B. General measures

53. General measures should prevent similar violations occurring. Member States are obligated to solve the problems underlying violations found.⁷² The measures to execute the judgment taken by the respondent State must be compatible with the conclusions and spirit of the Court's judgment.⁷³
54. The Court has been even less inclined to indicate the general measures that a Member State should take to implement a finding of a violation, even more rarely in freedom of association cases.⁷⁴
55. For instance, in *Sagir v Greece*, though the Court took the unusual decision to indicate individual measures in accordance with Article 46, these were specified 'without prejudice to any general measures that may be required for the prevention of or for the affording of redress in respect of other similar violations.'⁷⁵

⁶⁸ CoM, Case of *Mammadli against Azerbaijan and 5 Other Cases*, Res-54, 11 March 2021.

⁶⁹ *Kogan & Ors v Russia*.

⁷⁰ See, Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against the Russian Federation: measures required in the pending cases, CM/Inf/DH(2026)5 (11 March 2026) para. 172.

⁷¹ See, Newsroom: 'Council of Europe joins forces with the UN to urge Russia to implement ECHR judgments', 8 December 2023 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/council-of-europe-joins-forces-with-the-un-to-urge-russia-to-implement-echr-judgments>.

⁷² Recommendation Rec(2004)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the improvement of domestic remedies (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 May 2004, at its 114th Session).

⁷³ *Ilgar Mammadov v Azerbaijan* (Grand Chamber), Appl no. 15172/13, 29 May 2019, para. 186.

⁷⁴ See, e.g., *Aliyev v Azerbaijan*, para. 226.

⁷⁵ *Sagir & Ors v Greece*, para. 65.

56. Exceptionally, the Court was prepared to indicate general measures in the latest *Kavala* judgment from 2026 given that it viewed the case as

a particularly significant illustration of a problem that is systemic in nature and which is part of a wider context marked by the detention and prosecution of political opponents, human-rights defenders and journalists on the basis of criminal offences, the scope of which is in many cases interpreted extensively or artificially magnified. The violations found in the present case also reveal structural shortcomings which affect the guarantees of independence and impartiality of the judiciary, and which are likely to facilitate the exertion of direct or indirect influence by the executive branch on certain judicial decisions, particularly in cases with a sensitive political dimension.⁷⁶

57. In contrast, the Committee of Ministers has regularly engaged with States on the general measures that they must take to implement the Court's judgments, based on their action plans.

58. For example, in refusal to register, delayed registration and dissolution cases, the Committee of Ministers has engaged with States on the possible avenues to implement fully and effectively the Court's judgments and prevent recurrence, including by engaging with local task forces or groups of experts tasked to develop options for execution of general measures,⁷⁷ welcoming planned legislative and regulatory reforms, as well as parallel training and awareness-raising measures for judges and lawyers.⁷⁸ It has also considered subsequent judgments issued by the European Court as well as the continuing local practice to assess whether reforms and other efforts to prevent recurrence had worked in practice.⁷⁹

59. With respect to Article 18 violations in which there was an ulterior purpose to impede defenders and/or their associations from engaging in their work, for instance in the *Mammadli* group of cases, the Committee of Ministers:

firmly exhorted the authorities to urgently take the necessary steps to develop a solid and consistent judicial practice providing for a strong message of intolerance of similar abuses of the criminal justice system

and to

take concrete measures to pursue the planned amendments to the Law on Courts and Judges; and review the domestic framework on re-opening of proceedings in line with the Convention requirements.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *Kavala* (No. 2), para. 310.

⁷⁷ See, e.g., 1531st meeting, 10-12 June 2025 (DH), H46-19 Bekir-Ousta and Others group v. Greece (Application No. 35151/05).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ 1563rd meeting, 9-11 June 2026 (DH), H46-45 Ramzanova and Others group v. Azerbaijan (Application No. 44363/02); 1569th meeting, 15-16 September 2026 (DH), H46-13 United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Others group v. Bulgaria (Application No. 59491/00). See also, the analysis by the Secretariat in 1521st meeting, 4-6 March 2025 (DH), H46-14 House of Macedonian Civilisation and Others v. Greece (Application No. 1295/10).

⁸⁰ 1569th meeting, 15-16 September 2026 (DH), H46-5 Mammadli group v. Azerbaijan (Application No. 47145/14) Supervision of the execution of the European Court's judgments, CM/Notes/1569/H46-5.

60. With respect to some of the most protracted cases, the Committee of Ministers has been prepared to warn the states concerned that in the absence of tangible progress, it would 'consider taking new action [...] to support the efforts of the [...] authorities to abide by their obligations under Article 46 of the Convention deriving from these judgments.'⁸¹ This has not been a uniform approach, however. In the *Ilinden* group of cases (some cases pending execution for 20 years), the Committee of Ministers:

warmly welcomed the continuation of the authorities' cooperative dialogue with the Secretariat [...]

noted that all new applications for registration submitted since the Committee's last decision on substance by the applicant associations or similar associations have been refused at both the administrative and judicial levels; noted at the same time that these refusals do not in themselves prove failure to comply with the Court's judgments [...] and

decided to resume consideration of these cases at the latest at their March 2027 meeting (DH), in light of the analysis of the information provided and of any other relevant developments, with a view to considering whether to close their supervision of this group.⁸²

V. CONCLUSIONS

61. Many of the problems already identified in the 2022 study remain, some more entrenched.
62. Of the fifteen judgments that in 2022 had already been pending execution for more than 10 years, all but four of these judgments⁸³ remained pending more than four years later at the time of writing.
63. As set out by the recommendations of the Reykjavik Summit of the Council of Europe, heads of State and government should commit to safeguarding and further strengthening the Convention system, including by reaffirming the binding nature of the judgments and decisions on interim measures of the Court and their primacy over those of national jurisdictions; further reinforcing the execution of judgments by strengthening relevant co-operation activities and introducing a procedure for enhanced political dialogue in cases of non-compliance; and acknowledging and promoting the role of national parliaments, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations in monitoring compliance with the Convention and the Court's judgments.⁸⁴

⁸¹ 1563rd meeting, 9-11 June 2026 (DH), H46-15 Bekir-Ousta and Others group v. Greece (Application No. 35151/05), Supervision of the execution of the European Court's judgments.

⁸² 1569th meeting, 15-16 September 2026 (DH), H46-13 United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Others group v. Bulgaria (Application No. [59491/00](#)).

⁸³ *Ismayilov v Azerbaijan*; *Nasibova v Azerbaijan*; *Tebieti Mühafize Cemiyeti and Israfilov v Azerbaijan*; *Çetinkaya v Türkiye*.

⁸⁴ The Reykjavik Summit of the Council of Europe – United around values in the face of extraordinary challenges, PACE Recommendation 2245 (2023), para. 15. See also, 133rd Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg,

64. In accordance with the procedures of the Committee of Ministers, States are obligated to present an action plan on the individual and general measures they will take to execute a judgment, within six months from the judgment becoming final. Often, States have failed to submit action plans within the set timeframe, and there appears to be very limited action taken by the Committee of Ministers in such circumstances to elicit same. Considering the already lengthy timeframe for cases to result in final judgment before the Court, the waiting period for the Committee of Ministers to begin full engagement with States constitutes a further impediment to the realisation of rights under the Convention. For example, in the *Adana Tayad* case which involved the dissolution of an association on the grounds of its members' activities (judgment decided by the Court in July 2020), as at the time of writing in 2026, no action plan had been received. This is even though the Committee of Ministers has recognised it as a leading case and despite having transferred the monitoring of the execution of general measures of another Turkish dissolution case once the individual measures were deemed executed.⁸⁵
65. To remove cases from the purview of the Committee of Ministers, some Member States have implemented individual measures by, for example, paying any ordered non-pecuniary damages and costs and expenses, and enabling associations to be registered or to apply for re-registration. However, more often, Member States have refrained from implementing general measures to address structural issues and guarantee non-recurrence. Instead of keeping these cases under review until general measures have been executed, the Committee of Ministers has increasingly decided to close its supervision of the cases, transferring any remaining pending general measures to the purview of other cases which remain open.⁸⁶ Arguably, this has obscured the extent of measures states are still required to take to fully execute the judgments as well as the gravity of the violations, sometimes leading to repeat problems in new cases as has happened with the recent conviction of Anar Mammadli.⁸⁷
66. The failure to execute, and the delayed execution of, judgments of the Court involving freedom of association constitute a continuation and exacerbation of the violations of freedom of association that applicants have already experienced and contravene the standards related to the treatment of NGOs applicable to Council of Europe Member States, including Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 and Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11. The failed and delayed execution of such judgments shows a

16-17 May 2024), Declaration by the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe.

⁸⁵ Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)150, Association of Solidarity with the Oppressed against Turkey (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 July 2024 at the 1503rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)

⁸⁶ See, e.g., Resolution CM/ResDH(2024)150, Association of Solidarity with the Oppressed against Turkey, (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 July 2024 at the 1503rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*); Resolution CM/ResDH(2023)467, Çetinkaya against Turkey (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 December 2023 at the 1484th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*); Resolution CM/ResDH(2022)346, Azizov and Novruzlu against Azerbaijan (Mammadli group), (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 8 December 2022 at the 1451st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*).

⁸⁷ 1569th meeting (September 2026) (DH) - Rule 9.1 -Communication from the applicant's representative (09/09/2026) in the group of cases of Mammadli v. Azerbaijan (Application No. 47145/14).

disregard for the essential contribution made by civil society in all their diversity to the cultural life and social well-being of democratic societies and undermines the adherence to principles of democratic pluralism.

VI. POSSIBLE STEPS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE EXECUTION

67. In respect of the foregoing and sustained failure to execute judgments concerning freedom of association, the Expert Council on NGO Law considers that there are a number of steps that could be taken by the Court, member States, the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General, Council of Europe local offices, the Parliamentary Assembly, national human rights institutions (“NHRIs”) and civil society.

The Court

68. The Court could more readily accept Article 18 claims concerning the bad faith violation of the right to freedom of association, whether directly or in accordance with other rights violations as has been done in the *Kogan* and *Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK)* cases.
69. Moreover, while its judgments are essentially declaratory in nature, the Court could more often indicate the measures required to execute the judgment in accordance with Article 46 of the Convention, as it has done in the *Sagir* case.

Member States

70. Upon receipt of a final judgment finding a violation related to freedom of association, member States could engage more expeditiously with the Department for the Execution of Judgments and prepare at the earliest opportunity and in advance of the stipulated deadline, an action report detailing the individual and general measures already taken and those planned.
71. As regards individual measures, member States could ensure, *inter alia*, that applicants whose rights have been recognised by the Court as having been violated by virtue of having been denied the possibility to register their associations, where registration has been significantly delayed or where the organisations have been involuntarily dissolved, are afforded an expedited route to registration. They could recognise that erecting new barriers to registration that frustrate applicants’ efforts to register their associations contravenes the conclusions and spirit of such judgments.
72. Equally, where the Court has held that individuals have arbitrarily detained or persecuted individuals in any other way because of their connection to associations with a view to stifling civil society space, member States could speedily fulfil the primary obligation to cease the conduct considered unlawful in its judgment. Erecting new

barriers to maintain or restore the unlawful conduct contravenes the conclusions and spirit of such judgments.

73. With respect to general measures, member States could promptly take adequate and effective steps to guarantee non-recurrence. In addition to conducting their own assessments as to the most appropriate methods to guarantee non-recurrence, they should engage with NHRIs, civil society and other subject-matter specialists to ensure that all barriers and impediments are known and capable of being fully addressed. Member States could also take advantage of the good offices and expertise of Council of Europe bodies, including the Expert Council as appropriate, to formulate adequate and effective general measures. General measures must reflect the prevailing circumstances and may include as appropriate, *inter alia*, legislative measures to change where necessary the procedure for registration of associations which reflect fully the findings of the Court, regulatory measures as well as awareness-raising to ensure standards are known and fully applied by decision-makers.

Committee of Ministers

74. In the light of the continued non-implementation of many judgments of the Court concerning freedom of association, supervision of the execution of these judgments could be prioritised, so that the important work of NGOs is not impeded. Certainly, this would be in line with the undertaking of the Committee of Ministers to pay:

special attention (...) to the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights concerning human rights defenders and the enabling environment for human rights work, which have yet to be implemented.⁸⁸

75. Judgments in which the Court has found a violation of article 18 require by their nature a special attention from the Committee of Ministers under its enhanced supervision procedure. However, there are additional categories of cases which require similar consideration, including, *inter alia*, repetitive cases, cases involving structural violations as well as any cases which remain unexecuted fully for more than five years from the issuance of the final judgment. Yet, by way of example, the *Ramazanov* group of cases was pending implementation under the standard supervision procedure since 2007, and these were only placed under the enhanced supervision procedure only in 2026.⁸⁹
76. As it has done with respect to cases concerning the Russian Federation by indicating the measures required to address the violations determined by the Court and transmitting decisions to United Nations bodies, or with Türkiye, by referred the non-execution of a

⁸⁸ Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 28 November 2018 at the 1330th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*) Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 28 November 2018 at the 1330th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*) Para. IV (c).

⁸⁹ 1563rd meeting, 9-11 June 2026 (DH), H46-45, *Ramazanov and Others group v. Azerbaijan* (Application No. 44363/02).

judgment to the Court, the Committee of Ministers could remain creative in its efforts to foster the execution of judgments. It could also maintain a close dialogue with member States and civil society.

77. A clear strategy of escalation could be adopted in cases involving civil society space, using the entirety of means at the Committee of Ministers' disposal, to address States' failure to execute judgments involving freedom of association. This could include warning of the possibility of, and resorting to, infringement proceedings in appropriate cases involving the failure to address violations identified by the Court linked to the refusal to register or the involuntary dissolution of associations.
78. The Committee of Ministers could also increase its exchanges and consultations with civil society on the execution of judgments that impact them, not only those involving freedom of association but also freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

The Secretary General

79. The Secretary General could, as encouraged at the [High-level Conference on the Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights, our shared responsibility in 2015](#):

use his/her authority in order to facilitate the execution of judgments raising complex and/or sensitive issues at the national level, including through the exercise of the powers entrusted to him/her under Article 52 of the Convention.⁹⁰

Local Offices

80. The Council of Europe Local Offices could play an active role to promote key judgments of the European Court concerning freedom of association by using their websites to disseminate and promote key judgments of the Court and decisions of the Committee of Ministers on their execution, preferably translated into the local language/s, and by contributing to their public discussion.⁹¹ This would contribute to the implementation of [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)11 of the Committee of Ministers on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe](#), which includes:

ensuring that Council of Europe local offices promote civil society's, NHRIs' and human rights defenders' work and give visibility to key judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, recommendations of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Venice Commission, and Parliamentary Assembly resolutions concerning the safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders.

⁹⁰ Brussels Declaration (27 March 2015), para. C(3)(d).

⁹¹ *Ibid*, paras. B(2)(f); B(2)(j).

The Parliamentary Assembly

81. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe should continue its regular reports on the execution of judgments of the Court to assess systematic failures, unaddressed root causes and delayed compliance across member States. It should invigorate the Parliamentary network it established to promote the implementation of judgments of the Court to promote sharing of good practice and collaboration across member States.

NHRIs and civil society

82. Both NHRIs and civil society organisations could make full use of the possibilities afforded to communicate with the Committee of Ministers on individual and general measures as part of the dialogue on execution of judgments involving freedom of association through rule 9 interventions and other means.
83. In particular, they could evaluate what is being stated in the Action Plans presented by member States, to ensure that the Committee of Ministers has adequate information to assess the strength of the measures that have been adopted and/or been proposed.

ANNEXES

Pending cases considered in the 2022 study

Adana Tayad v. Türkiye, no. 59835/10, 21 July 2020

Aliyev v. Azerbaijan, nos. 68762/14 and 71200/14, 20 September 2018

Aliyev and Others v. Azerbaijan, no. 28736/05, 18 December 2008

Association of Solidarity with the Oppressed v. Türkiye, no. 8064/13, 9 February 2021

Azizov and Novruzlu v. Azerbaijan, nos. 65583/13 70106/13, 18 February 2021

Bekir-Ousta and Others v. Greece, no. 35151/05, 11 October 2007

Bektashi Community and Others v. "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", nos. 48044/10, 75722/12 and 25176/13, 12 April 2018

Biblical Centre of the Chuvash Republic v. Russia, no. 33203/08, 12 June 2014

Çetinkaya v. Türkiye, no. 75569/01, 27 June 2006

Church of Scientology Moscow v. Russia, no. 18147/02, 5 April 2007

Church of Scientology of St Petersburg and Others v. Russia, no. 47191/06, 2 October 2014

Democracy and Human Rights Resource Centre and Mustafayev v. Azerbaijan, nos. 74288/14 and 64568/16), 14 October 2021

Emin and Others v. Greece, no. 34144/05, 27 March 2008

Genov v. Bulgaria, no. 40524/08, 23 March 2017

House of Macedonian Civilisation and Others v. Greece, no. 1295/10, 9 July 2015

Islam-Ittihad Association and Others v. Azerbaijan, No. 5548/05, 13 November 2014

Ismayilov v. Azerbaijan, no. 4439/04, 17 January 2008

Jafarov and Others v. Azerbaijan, no. 27309/14, 25 July 2019

Jehovah's Witnesses of Moscow v. Russia, no. 302/02, 10 June 2010

Kavala v. Türkiye, no. 28749/18, 10 December 2019

Kimlya and Others v. Russia, no. 76836/01, 1 October 2008

Macedonian Club for Ethnic Tolerance in Bulgaria and Radonov v. Bulgaria, no 67197/13, 28 May 2020

Magyar Keresztény Mennonita Egyház and Others v. Hungary, nos. 70945/11, 23611/12, 26998/12 et al., 8 April 2014

Mammadli v. Azerbaijan, no. 47145/14, 19 April 2018

Metodiev and Others v. Bulgaria, no. 58088/08, 15 June 2017

Moscow Branch of the Salvation Army v. Russia, no. 72881/01, 5 October 2006

Nasibova v. Azerbaijan, no. 4307/04, 18 October 2007

"Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese (Greek-Orthodox Ohrid Archdioese of the Peć Patriarchy)" v. "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", no. 3532/07, 16 November 2017

Ramazanov and Others v. Azerbaijan, no. 44363/02, 1 February 2007

Tebieti Mühafize Cemiyeti and Israfilov v. Azerbaijan, no. 37083/03, 8 October 2009

Tourkiki Enosi Xanthis and Others v. Greece, no. 26698/05, 27 March 2008

United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Ors v. Bulgaria, no. 59491/00, 19 January 2006

United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Ors v. Bulgaria (No 2), No. 34960/04, 18 October 2011

United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden and Others v. Bulgaria (No. 3), no. 29496/16, 11 January 2018

Vasilev and Society of the Repressed Macedonians in Bulgaria Victims of the Communist Terror v. Bulgaria, no. 23702/15, 28 May 2020

Yordan Ivanov and Others v. Bulgaria, no. 70502/13, 11 January 2018

Yunusova and Yunusov v. Azerbaijan (No. 2), no 68817/14, 16 July 2020

Zhdanov and Others v. Russia, nos. 12200/08, 35949/11 and 58282/12, 16 July 2019

New cases

Ancient Baltic Religious Association "Romuva" v. Lithuania, no. 48329/19, 8 June 2021

Andrey Rylkov Foundation and Ors v. Russia, nos. 37949/18 and 84 others, 18 June 2024

Anti-corruption Foundation (FBK) and Ors v. Russia, nos. 13505/20 and 138 others, 16 December 2025

A.O. Falun Dafa and Ors v. Moldova, no. 29458/15, 29 June 2021

Association of People of Silesian nationality (in liquidation) v. Poland, no. 26821/17, 14 March 2024

Bakradze v. Georgia, no. 20592/21, 7 November 2024

Bulgarian Orthodox Old Calendar Church and Ors v. Bulgaria, no. 56751/13, 20 April 2021

Christian Religious Organization of Jehovah's Witnesses in the NKR v Armenia, no. 41817/10, 22 March 2022

Ecodefence and Ors v. Russia, nos. 9988/13 and 60 others, 14 June 2022

Election Monitoring Centre and Ors v. Azerbaijan, no. 64733/09, 2 December 2021

Föderation Der Aleviten Gemeinden In Österreich v. Austria, no. 64220/19, 5 March 2024

Imranova and Ahmadova v. Azerbaijan, no. 41995/15, 23 February 2023

Independent Orthodox Church and Zahariev v. Bulgaria, no. 76620/14, 20 April 2021

Kavala v. Türkiye (Infringement proceedings) (Grand Chamber), no. 28749/18, 11 July 2022

Kavala v. Türkiye (No. 2) (Grand Chamber), no. 2170/24, 25 June 2026

Kobaliya and Ors v. Russia, nos. 39446/16 and 106 others, 22 October 2024

Kogan and Ors v. Russia, no. 54003/20, 7 March 2023

Mariya Alekhina and Others v. Russia (No. 2), no. 10299/15, 28 November 2023

Markin and Ors v. Russia, no. 20519/18 and others, 16 October 2025

Preobrazheniye Rossii & Ors v. Russia, no. 78607/11, 24 May 2022

Taganrog LRO and Ors v. Russia, nos. 32401/10 and 19 others, 7 June 2022

Sagir and Others v. Greece, no. 34724/18, 24 June 2025

Tsentr Prosvetitelnykh I Issledovatel'skikh Programm v. Russia, no. 61214/08, 14 December 2021

Tyumen Regional Branch of All-Russia Movement 'For Human Rights' & Ors v. Russia, no. 18490/09, 22 February 2022.

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