CONFERENCE OF INGOs OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONFÉRENCE DES OING DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Biographies of the nominated members of the Expert Council on NGO Law July 2021 – October 2027



Jeremy McBride, President

Barrister, Monckton Chambers, London, specialising in cases before the European Court of Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Committee. Scientific Expert for the adoption of the Fundamental Principles on the Legal Status of NGOs and the Recommendation on the Legal Status of NGOs in Europe (CM/Rec(2007)14). Member of the ODIHR-Venice Commission Expert Working Group for the preparation of the Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association and consultant for the drafting of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer. Co-founder and former Chair of INTERIGHTS (International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights). Formerly, Reader in International Human Rights Law, University of Birmingham and visiting Professor, Central European University. Mr McBride resides in Strasbourg.



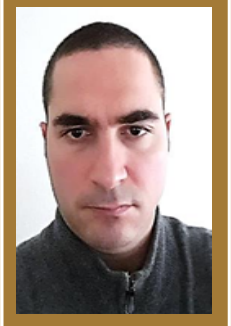
Pavel Chikov

Human rights lawyer and head of the Agora International Human Rights Group, member of the Presidential Council of Human Rights (Russia). Law School (Kazan State University, Russia) and MPA (University of North Dakota, USA) graduate, PhD in International Law. He has been working in the human rights field since 1999, organizing legal defence for hundreds of criminal cases against civic and political activists, bloggers and journalists. His team represents dozens of Russian NGOs that faced a lot of pressure since 2006, including the so-called Foreign Agents Law. Pavel Chikov resides in Kazan, Russia.



Simona Constantinescu

Legal expert actively working for a more favourable environment for civil society organizations for over 20 years. She started as a lawyer and since 2011 served as Head of Development and Advocacy for Civil Society Development Foundation. She managed grant-making programmes involving more than 250 NGOs and has been engaged in major advocacy campaigns for improving the legislation. She led or was part of some dozens of working groups on legislative changes affecting the third sector, either as legal writer, researcher, spokesperson or advocate for change at Romanian and international level. Simona Constantinescu resides in Bucharest, Romania.



Hugues de Suremain

Co-founder and legal coordinator of the NGO "European Prison Litigation Network". He was formerly responsible officer of the investigation division of the International Prison Observatory (1999-2004), before being its legal and litigation coordinator (2004-2010). Between 2011 and 2016, he was a lawyer at the Paris Bar, practicing in a law firm specialised before the judicial and administrative supreme courts. He has collaborated as a researcher with the University of Florence between 2014 and 2016. He is currently member of the board of the International Prison Observatory. Hugues de Suremainresides in Kiev, Ukraine.



Carla Ferstman

Professor in the law faculty at the University of Essex and Director of the Essex Human Rights Centre (October 2024 - present). She is the former Director of REDRESS (2004 – 2018) and previously Legal Director (2001 – 2004). Previously, she worked as a criminal law barrister in Canada. She also worked with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Rwanda (1995 – 1997), Amnesty International (1998 – 1999) and was Executive Legal Advisor of the Commission for Real Property Claims of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1999 – 2001). She also served on the panel of judges of the Aban Tribunal, an International People's Tribunal on Iran's Atrocities in the context of a crackdown on country-wide protests in November 2019. She is currently a member of the Advisory Committee of Lawyers for Justice in Libya. Carla Ferstman resides in the United Kingdom.



Jade Glenister

Australian qualified lawyer currently working as Deputy Director of an NGO that supports and campaigns alongside individuals in immigration detention. She has worked across Europe providing legal and policy advice on human rights, focussing on equality and non-discrimination and the prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment. Co-author of "Justice or Complicity? LGBT Rights and the Russian Courts" and previous Assistant Editor of the Equal Rights Review. She has provided training on detention monitoring and equality law to lawyers, journalists and government staff. Ms Glenister resides in the United Kingdom.



Dragan Golubovic

From Serbia, an international consultant, professor of law, and member of the Expert Council on NGO Law since its inception in 2008. He holds a J.D. and LL.M from the School of Law in Novi Sad (Újvidék), LL. M from the New York State University and S.J.D. from the Central European University Budapest. He worked on projects relating to civil society, social entrepreneurship, human rights, public administration and public participation in more than twenty countries. From 1998 to 2013 he was a Senior Legal Adviser with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (Washington D.C) and its affiliate, the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (Budapest). Dragan Golubovic resides in Budapest.



Eszter Hartay

Program Director at the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) with 14 years of experience in creating an enabling legal environment for civil society. She has worked in over 16 countries focusing on CSO framework legislation, CSO-government cooperation, participation in policy-making, financial sustainability, climate action and anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing, among others. She has been mapping out emerging trends impacting civil society, including the use of digital technologies and AI for fundraising and public participation. Before joining ECNL she gained 5 years of professional experience as a corporate lawyer. Eszter is Hungarian and resides in the Hague, Netherlands.



Ulaş Karan

Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at Istanbul Bilgi University Faculty of Law and Board Member of the University's Human Rights Law Research Center. Holds LLM and PhD degrees in public law. His researches and studies mainly focused on discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, freedom of expression, association and assembly, individual application to ECtHR and Turkish Constitutional Court and author of reports, manuals, books and articles in these areas. Also member of the European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination and the Berkeley Comparative Equality & Anti-Discrimination Law Study Group. Ulaş Karan resides in Istanbul, Turkey.



Andrea Menapace

Andrea is co-founder and the executive director of the Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (CILD) since 2014. He is co-founder and president of the Liberties (Civil Liberties Union for Europe). He is the co-director and lecturer at the University of Roma Tre's post-graduate diploma in Non-Governmental Organisations and Human Rights. He previously worked for the Transparency & Accountability Initiative in London and was a researcher about Italy at the Open Government Partnership. Consistently active in the field of human rights, he began his career as a humanitarian worker before becoming a consultant and researcher for governments as well as non-governmental and international organisations. The co-founder of Diritto Di Sapere (Right To Know), the first Italian organisation working on the right of access to information, he graduated in law at the University of Trento. Andrea Menapace resides in London, United Kingdom.



Goran Miletic

Human Rights Lawyer, Senior Advisor to the Executive Director at Civil Rights Defenders,
Goran Miletic is member of European Commission of Sexual Orientation Law, author of many human rights reports in the Balkan region, mainly focused on Roma, national minorities, LGBT and human rights defenders. His work within Civil Rights Defenders is focused on protection and strengthening of organisations and human rights defenders and creating environment for work of NGOs. He is founder of many leading human rights events in the region such as Rule of Law Forum, Moot Court Competition and Roma Summit. Goran Miletic resides in Stockholm, Sweden.



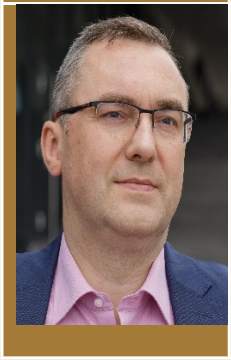
Márta Pardavi

Co-chair of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, a leading human rights NGO in Budapest, Hungary. A lawyer by training, she has recently been focusing on the threats to the rule of law and civil society space in Hungary and in the EU, and on strengthening alliances between human rights defenders in the EU. Márta serves on the boards of PILnet, International Partnership for Human Rights and Verzio International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival. She has been awarded the 2018 William D. Zabel Human Rights Award from Human Rights First, Civil Rights Defender's Civil Rights Defenders of the Year 2019 award and was chosen to be a member of POLITICO28 Class of 2019. She lives in Budapest, Hungary.



Rita Patrício

Amnesty International's Senior Executive Officer for the Council of Europe since 2010. She leads on AI's advocacy with the Council of Europe. She previously worked as an adviser to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, at the Portuguese Mission to the UN in New York, with the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association in Mozambique, and for the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. She holds a law degree from the University of Lisbon and a European Masters' in Human Rights and Democratisation from the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation. Rita Patrício is Portuguese and resides in Strasbourg, France.



Rytis Jokubauskas

Legal expert with over 20 years of experience in NGO law. Lawyer, international consultant, working on projects related to justice sector reform and the rule of law. Former Vice-Minister of Justice of Lithuania. In 2004, Rytis co-founded NGO Law Institute to improve the legal environment for NGOs and civil society. He has been involved in most legislative initiatives concerning the legal framework for NGOs in Lithuania. Rytis is also a consultant to the NGO Coalition, one of Lithuania's major umbrella networks of NGOs. He has been a member of the Expert Council on NGO Law since 2018. Rytis resides in Vilnius, Lithuania.



Cyril Ritchie, Honorary President

Who was instrumental in the writing of the original Council of Europe Guidelines on the functioning of NGOs in Europe, and represented the Conference of INGOs to the expert committee drafting the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2007) 14 on the legal status of NGOs in Europe. He was President of the NGO Grouping on Civil Society and Democracy in Europe from 2000-2008. From 2011 to 2018 Cyril Ritchie was President of the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) and has served as President of the Expert Council on NGO Law from January 2008 to July 2018. Cyril Ritchie resides in Geneva, Switzerland.