

June 2025



News roundup



Reflections from June

Dear reader,

In June, I focused my work on a broad range of human rights concerns, from the treatment of Roma communities to violence against women, from shrinking civic space to the protection of journalists, lawyers, LGBTI people and child poverty.



In a [Memorandum](#) addressed to the **Greek authorities**, I urged stronger efforts to ensure **Roma** access to adequate housing and protection from discrimination and police violence. While there have been some efforts, major obstacles persist. I recommended the accelerated implementation of the Roma inclusion strategy, the provision of adequate housing, effective investigations into police abuses, robust anti-racism training, and zero tolerance for hate speech. I underscored the need to execute the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

I addressed a letter to the Speaker of Parliament of **Hungary**, urging lawmakers to refrain from adopting the Draft Law on Transparency of Public Life unless it is amended to align with international human rights law. The draft raised serious concerns in relation to freedom of expression and association, the right to privacy, the right to a fair trial, and the prohibition of discrimination.



Russia's continued aggression against and across **Ukraine** remains a grave concern. I [reiterated](#) my **solidarity** with the Ukrainian people and my admiration for their resilience and courage. It is crucial that we intensify our efforts to ensure **accountability** for these violations and provide justice and redress for victims.

In relation to the **Slovak Republic**, I released a [statement](#) urging Parliament to reject constitutional amendments that risk undermining human rights protections. One key proposal seeks to preserve sovereignty over issues linked to "national identity," including cultural and ethical matters, a concept that threatens to bypass international human rights obligations. Additionally, a proposal to recognise only male and female sexes within the constitution risks jeopardising the rights of trans and intersex people. I repeated concerns over potential negative impacts on family life and comprehensive sexuality education, and I appealed to lawmakers to uphold the rule of law and the rights of all people in Slovakia.

Turning to **Germany**, I wrote a [letter](#) to the Federal Minister of the Interior to raise concerns about restrictions on **freedom of expression and peaceful assembly**, particularly in relation to protests concerning the conflict in Gaza. I drew attention to reports of excessive police force, including against children, and stressed that responses must not discriminate based on political views, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or migration status.

In relation to **Azerbaijan**, I [voiced](#) serious concern about the criminal convictions of seven **journalists** from Abzas Media, who received sentences ranging from 7.5 to 9 years in prison. I repeated my call for the immediate release of all journalists, **human rights defenders**, and civil society activists detained for their legitimate work or for expressing dissenting views.

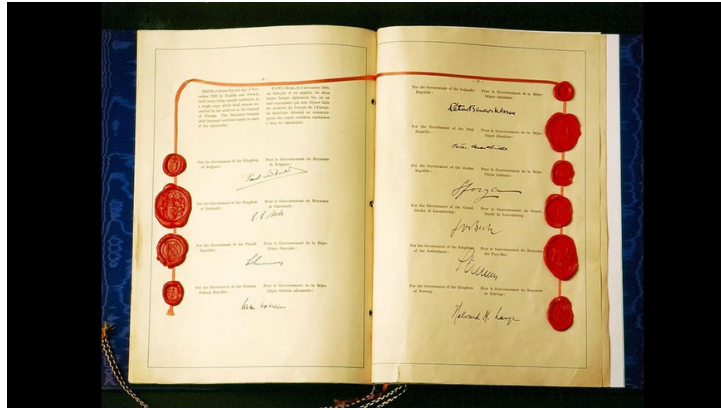


The Magpie Project is a civil society initiative in the East London Borough of Newham supporting mothers with children under five affected by the No Recourse to Public Funds policy.

I carried out a [visit](#) to the **United Kingdom** where I focused on important human rights issues such as **child poverty**, **migration**, observance of the **European Convention on Human Rights**, **protest** restrictions and the situation of **trans people**.

Finally, during Pride month, the human rights situation for **LGBTI people** formed a central part of my agenda. At the Budapest Pride 30 International Human Rights Conference, I [stood](#) in solidarity with **Hungary's** LGBTI communities, celebrating their diversity and denouncing the continued violations of their rights. I also issued a [statement](#) expressing deep disappointment at the decision to ban the Budapest Pride March, yet another move in a pattern of repression. I called on the Hungarian authorities to ensure peaceful participants can march safely, free from fear, reprisals, or violence, and to support an enabling environment for all human rights defenders.

Tackling **violence against women** must remain a top priority across Europe. During a meeting under Malta's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on "Dismantling Gender Norms," I [emphasised](#) that gender-based violence is a human rights issue that demands urgent, systemic solutions. These include greater support for civil society, improved data collection, investment in digital education, enhanced legal protections, and robust law enforcement and victim support mechanisms.



The European Convention on Human Rights

At a conference marking the adoption and opening for signature of the Council of Europe **Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer**, I [welcomed](#) this crucial step forward. In the face of global threats, including harassment and persecution, this Convention is a vital instrument to safeguard both the legal profession and the broader rule of law. I urged all member states to swiftly sign and ratify the Convention and to remain vigilant in defending lawyers from all forms of interference.

Finally, in my latest [Shout Out](#), I warned against the rising tide of anti-migrant sentiment in Europe. I criticised a joint open letter by nine member states that challenged the work of the European Court of Human Rights. While governing is challenging, compromising on human rights principles is not the answer. We need evidence-based policies that address root causes and consider the long view of history.

Thank you for reading,

Michael O'Flaherty

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

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