

May 2025



## News roundup



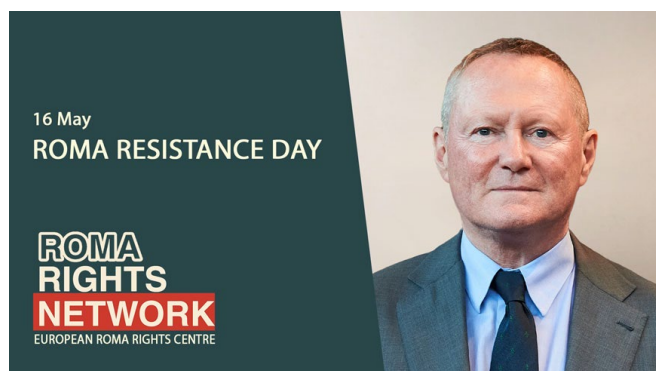
### Reflections from May

Dear reader,

In May my efforts to defend and promote human rights across our member states focused on the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights regarding policing of demonstrations and the right to peaceful assembly, on LGBTI rights, migration, digital governance, the human rights of Roma, democratic security and the need to embed human rights in the peace process in Ukraine.

At the Council of Europe Ministerial Session, I [stressed](#) that the full adherence to human rights obligations in the field of democracy, including the protection of civil society and the rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression, should be at the heart of efforts **towards democratic security**. I also reiterated the importance of embedding human rights in all aspects of the path to peace in **Ukraine**.

This month, I marked **Roma** Resistance Day by honouring Roma human rights defenders and their fight against centuries of discrimination. I [emphasised](#) that unity in combating racism and upholding human rights is key to sustain their efforts amid shrinking civic space.



Across member states, Roma communities continue to face systemic exclusion, violence, and hostility. In **Bulgaria** over 200 Roma people were left homeless in

Sofia following the demolition of their homes, despite a European Court ruling to prevent it. I [called](#) on the Bulgarian authorities to provide emergency shelter, work with affected families on adequate housing solutions, and uphold the relevant Council of Europe standards.

The need for a human rights-based approach to **migration** has been another systemic issue on which I focused. In my Memorandum to the **Greek authorities**, I [reiterated](#) concerns about pushbacks and violation of migrants' rights at the borders and recommended ending illegal practices, ensuring individual asylum procedures, and investigating reports of violations of migrants' human rights.



Image taken by Frontex detection plane on 13 June 2023 of the Adriana boat before it capsized. ©Frontex

This month I supported the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. In two communications to the Committee of Ministers, I [observed](#) that **Georgia** still has to fully implement two groups of cases. One relates to ill-treatment, mostly by law enforcement officers, and ineffective investigations into these violations. The other group of cases is related to the arbitrary use of administrative detention during peaceful assemblies and insufficient judicial review.

At the European Dialogue on Internet Governance, I pushed back against the narrative that regulation stifles innovation. I [urged](#) governments to move forward with **AI legislation**, support responsible self-regulation, and develop tools to assess human rights impacts.



At the IDAHOT+ Forum in Valletta I [spoke out](#) against rising attacks on **LGBTI** rights across Europe. These are not isolated incidents: they are attacks on our democracies and on the rule of law. I called for the repeal of discriminatory laws, stronger international action, and the political courage to stand up to hate.

Human dignity must always be protected. Every breach of dignity, every failure of justice, erodes the democratic fabric and the humanity we all share. Ensuring that human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled must remain a collective commitment.

Thank you for reading,

*Michael O'Flaherty*

*Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights*

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