

Roundtable on Ensuring effective communication on migration and the European Convention on Human Rights

A contribution towards the New Democratic Pact for Europe

*Organised by the Council of Europe Division on Migration and Refugees and the
European Network of National Human Rights Institutions*

18 September 2026

Strasbourg and online

Concept Note

On 7 November 2025 the Council of Europe Division on Migration and Refugees (DMR) organised a first [Roundtable](#) on fact-based communication on migration which brought together international experts to discuss the growing problems of misinformation and hate speech about migrants and refugees. Last year's Roundtable, as the present one, was a contribution towards the Council of Europe's [New Democratic Pact](#) which notably aims to strengthen commitment among European countries on the future of democracy, grounded in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The first Roundtable identified key challenges, including how media focus on migration, even when positive, tends to reinforce the perception it is a problem; how people's underlying attitudes about migration are formed early in life and are deeply embedded; and how extreme anti-migrant voices have formed international networks that are pushing conspiracy theories into mainstream discourse. Contributors emphasised the need for a range of multi-level and multi-stakeholder, short- and long-term approaches in response.

One of the major topics was misinformation concerning the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and migration. A [study](#) conducted by the Oxford University Bonavero Institute of Human Rights between January and June 2025 found that 75% of mainstream media news stories in the UK about the ECHR related to migration and misrepresented the facts of the cases in question. It also found that the UK's immigration tribunal system was misunderstood and misreported, and that (at that time) there was a lack of reliable data available from the government or other credible sources to promptly counter such misreporting.

The need for fact-based information about migration is high on the DMR's agenda. Last year it published a [Migration Key Facts Sheet](#) which aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of key migration statistics at both global and European levels as well a [document](#) with Frequently Asked Questions about the ECHR and migration.



The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) with its members are natural counterparts to the Council of Europe in strengthening the protection and promotion of human rights, including support to the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). A key aspect of this role is raising awareness of the importance of the implementation of ECtHR judgments and ensuring full compliance with the Convention system. Through their independent status and evidence-based approach, NHRIs also contribute to informing and shaping public debate on migration and human rights. Their unique position – bridging state authorities and the public - enables NHRIs to promote narratives grounded in facts, evidence and values. This is particularly important in countering disinformation and fostering informed discussion on migration.

ENNHRI further supports members by providing a platform for capacity building and peer exchange. This includes strengthening NHRIs' ability to advise on human rights - based approach in migration governance, to support the implementation of the Court's judgments, and to effectively address misinformation or disinformation. In addition, ENNHRI's Working Groups help build capacity and knowledge among NHRI expert staff through peer exchange. ENNHRI has WGs on both migration and on communication.

The Roundtable of September 2026 aims to serve as a forum for reflecting and discussing constructively about:

- *major challenges faced by the Court (and the wider ECHR system) in this context;*
- *possibilities of furthering an impactful communication strategy and action in order to inform about the positive impact of the Court on national law and practice, and counter misinformation.*
- *vital roles played by NHRIs, CSOs and mainstream and social media.*

The Roundtable will bring together representatives of the Registry of the Court and of the Council of Europe, human rights lawyers, NHRIs, CSOs, journalists and policy-makers, to identify strategies and tools for ensuring fact-based and effective communication on the ECtHR case-law concerning migration.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Meeting room: EDQM¹ Room 100

Morning Session

Introductory opening remarks

09:15– 09:25	Abel Campos , Deputy Registrar, European Court of Human Rights
09:25– 09:35	Clare Ovey , Director of Human Rights, DGI, Council of Europe
09:35– 09:45	Louise Holck , ENNHRI Chair, Head of the Danish Institute for Human Rights (online)

An overview of main challenges concerning public discourse about migration and the ECHR, and possible strategies to tackle them

Moderator: Clare Ovey

09:45– 10:00	Rachael Kondak , Head of the Private Office of the Court's President
10:00– 10:15	Andrew Cutting , Council of Europe Media Department
10:15– 10:30	Edyta Tuta-Lorenz , Senior Human Rights Officer/ Richard Adams , Communications Officer ENNHRI
10:30– 10:45	Alice Donald , Professor of Human Rights Law, Middlesex University, UK
10:45– 11:00	Q&A

11:00-11:15 Coffee break

The role played by NHRIs and CSOs – Challenges and strategies to reinforce communication related to ECHR and migration at national level

Moderator: Edyta Tuta-Lorenz

11:15– 11:30	Ophélie MARREL , Chair of the ENNHRI Working Group on Asylum and Migration; Legal Adviser, Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH), France
11:30– 11:45	Carol Hunt , Communications Specialist, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
11:45– 12:00	Daniel Holder , Vice-President, FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights)
12:00– 12:15	Adriana Tidona , Europe Regional Office, Amnesty International

¹ European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines, Council of Europe, Allée Kastner, Strasbourg. Please note that the roundtable will be recorded in order to facilitate the summary report drafting.

12:15-12:30	Ioulietta Bisiouli , Director, European Implementation Network
12:30-12:45	Q&A

Lunch break

Afternoon Session

Reinforcing the role of mainstream and social media in promoting effective information about the ECHR and migration – identification of promising practices

Moderator: Dušan Vojnović, Communications Officer, DMR

14:00–14:15	Aidan White , Journalist, Founder of Ethical Journalism Network
14:15–14:30	Ricardo Gutierrez , General Secretary, European Federation of Journalists
14:30–14:45	Nikolaj Nielsen , Journalist, EU Observer
14:45–15:00	Q&A
15:00-15:15	Ioanna Lachana , Media Officer, European Court of Human Rights
15:15-15:35	Ivyliet Ventura Kessel , Digital Communication and Data Analytics Officer, Council of Europe
15:35-16:00	Q&A

Wrap-up session: Ways forward – enhancing multi-level synergies

16:00-16:15	Clare Ovey , Director of Human Rights, DGI, Council of Europe Debbie Kohner , Secretary General, ENNHRI
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Why a New Democratic Pact for Europe?

Democratic backsliding, disinformation, impunity, and authoritarianism are undermining democracy in Europe. People are increasingly afraid and frustrated. It comes at a time when democratic security – the resilience of our democratic institutions, freedoms, and values – is our first line of defence against the threats we face. A collective response is needed. There is no quick fix and no single solution. With the New Democratic Pact, the Council of Europe unites with its partners to boost solutions that work and create new responses. To identify them, consultations are needed. The Pact will serve as a collective and inclusive process – not to reinvent democracy, but to reinforce its foundations, amplify its benefits, and innovate its form to make it tangible for everyone, especially younger generations. The directions set during the consultation phase running through 2026 will shape the work that follows.