



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Launch of the ECHR Knowledge Sharing platform

Speech by Bjørn Berge,
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Strasbourg, 18 October 2022

President of the European Court of Human Rights,

President-elect

Judges of the Court,

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The launch of our new Knowledge Sharing platform is an important moment for European justice.

This new tool will strengthen the dialogue between the European Court of Human Rights and national courts, so that Convention-related issues can be identified more quickly - and addressed more efficiently - at the national level.

More than that, it will open the Court's case law not only to judges across our member states –

But to all legal professionals and to the general public too.

In doing so, it will improve understanding the European Convention on Human Rights and help ensure its application in our modern and fast-changing societies.

This is vitally important.

The implementation of the Convention is the first priority in the Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe.

And, as the Convention's Protocol 15 makes clear, it is primarily the responsibility of national authorities themselves to ensure that this happens.

That is what we mean when we talk about subsidiarity.

At a time when our values – human rights themselves – are being challenged in some parts of our continent –

And with tragic and terrible consequences that are plain to see –

It is crucial both that authorities fulfil their obligations, and that this Organisation does what it can to help them do so.

The Knowledge Sharing platform will be of central importance to that.

But it is not a solitary initiative.

Rather, it is a key aspect of our long-standing approach.

In particular, I think of Protocol 16 of the Convention which allows the highest domestic courts and tribunals to request from the Court advisory opinions on questions of principle related to the Convention itself.

And the decade-long Interlaken Process aimed at reform of the Court that would improve its efficiency and effectiveness, underpinned by the subsidiarity principle.

So, the Knowledge Sharing platform represents a further, ambitious step in line with the evolution of our ambitions and the growth of technological possibilities.

Alongside efforts to strengthen pan-European judicial dialogue on human rights through the Superior Court's Network –

And plans to equip member states' judges with the methodology and IT tools needed to ensure that they have access to the same information available to judges at the Court itself –

What we have, in sum, is a project that will help the European Convention on Human Rights put down deeper roots than ever in justice systems throughout our 46 member states.

So, I want to thank you, President Spano, the Court's Registrar Marialena Tsirli, Director General Giakoumopoulos and all the staff across the Court and DGI for their joint efforts in making the Knowledge-sharing Platform a reality.

It is a credit to your collective efforts.

I also want to thank those that have invested in it financially.

Last year, I presented this project to our Permanent Representations.

And I asked for their support.

Over recent months funding has been provided by France, Ireland and the Human Rights Trust Fund, which was created by Norway together with the Council of Europe and the Council of Europe Development Bank and of which Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland the United Kingdom are members.

Our thanks go to all of them.

Moving forward, I hope that others will also demonstrate their political support through their financial contributions.

This, ultimately, is what will fund the Knowledge Sharing platform and ensure that its great potential is realised for the benefit of justice on our continent.

Thank you for your attention.