



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

## **Public launch of the ECHR-KS**

Speech by Marialena Tsirli

*Strasbourg, 18 October 2022*

Thank you, dear Bjørn.

Dear President Spano,

Dear President Elect,

Distinguished Ambassadors and Members of Permanent representations,

Dear Government agents,

Dear Director General,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our President and the Deputy Secretary General have eloquently explained the context of the joint project between the Court and the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law and have stressed the potential of the Court's Knowledge Sharing platform in terms of subsidiarity.

Allow me to briefly recall the genesis of the project we are proudly presenting today.

Some years ago we came to the realisation that knowledge on the Court's case-law was dispersed throughout our own working space, and that Judges and Registry lawyers needed access to such knowledge in a centralised and systemic manner.

Under the stewardship of my predecessor, Sir Roderick Liddell, who is among us today, and of our former Jurisconsult, Lawrence Early, who is following online, we decided to create a one-stop Knowledge Sharing Platform where each one of us could easily find everything they needed to know about the Court's case-law. Taking over from them, Anna Austin, the Jurisconsult, and myself, in cooperation with the Directorate General of Human Rights and the Rule of Law, decided to fix the ambitious goal of adapting the Platform for external use, starting with the two official languages of the Court (English and French) and then, hopefully, finances permitting, to gradually duplicate it in non-official languages.

Why go to all this trouble? Because it's really worth it! Our KS platform is not a data base where you will find the raw case-law data: the Court's judgments and decisions can be found on our HUDOC database. It is rather a system which provides detailed contextualized analysis of the Court's case-law on all of the key Convention subjects. Crucially, it is not a static system: the analytical content is

updated every week and, importantly, it can expand to provide analyses on new and emerging case-law issues.

In sum, the platform provides centralised and full Convention analysis updated on a weekly basis and evolving in content as needs be. Judges and Registry lawyers have thereby effective access to the latest case-law developments for immediate application.

At the Court, we have been using this system for almost four years now and it has been truly transformative. The KS Platform has become the paradigm for our substantive work and the benefits, when it comes to the quality of drafting and processing time are, for us, more than evident. We have shared a version of the Platform with the Superior Courts Network, which now includes 102 courts from 44 member States of the Council of Europe as well as the Court of Justice of the European Union and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which both have observer status. The feedback has been really positive – and I think this is an understatement.

This is the reason why we decided to make this gold mine of knowledge available to the public. As the President and the Deputy Secretary General have explained, one of the overarching themes of the reform process beginning in Interlaken has been to increase the embeddedness of the Convention at national level so our national partners can fulfil their primary role in the implementation of the Convention. Complete Convention case-law knowledge will be an invaluable tool in that regard. Indeed, we consider that this will be a game changer for the Convention system, providing a solution to the complexity and volume of the Court’s case-law and, crucially, surmounting soon, we hope, the language barrier to understanding and applying the Convention.

However, as the Deputy Secretary General has stressed, despite the generous contributions already received from France, Ireland and the Human Rights Trust Fund, for which we are extremely grateful, our budgetary resources do not allow us at this stage to be too ambitious in the development of interfaces in non-official languages unless more member States agree to provide more extrabudgetary funding.

So, let me show you how the Knowledge Sharing platform works.

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In a few minutes, the platform will be accessible via the Court’s website by simply clicking on the button located on the top right corner, next to the HUDOC database. You will be able to select the English or French interface at your convenience and, hopefully, in the future, the very same interfaces in non-official languages.

From the main page of the Platform, you can choose to navigate by Articles of the Convention or by what we call “Transversal Themes”, which are topics raising issues under multiple Convention provisions, such as Environment or Immigration. Each Article and Transversal Theme page is fed by one or two Registry lawyers with a particular specialisation in the relevant field, whom we call Case-Law Coordinators. They are the linchpins of the whole KS system who, under the supervision of the Jurisconsult of the Court’s Registry, provide the content and keep it up to date.

This is the page on Article 2 (right to life). We made navigation as easy and intuitive as possible. On the top, you will find the Case-Law Guide, with which you are already familiar. These are analytical guides to the Article in question, referencing case-law filtered for relevance and consistency. Each Guide is re-edited every 6 months.

Right below, we have the Article Updates, where you will find judgements and decisions of jurisprudential relevance delivered in the previous weeks. With simply the Guide and these Updates, you can be up to date to the previous week on case-law developments on that particular subject, without having to wait for the semestrial re-edited Guide.

Further down, you will find a series of Key Themes, which are annotated case-lists on a particular topic, related to the main one of right to life, concerning subjects such as domestic violence or medical negligence.

Finally, on the right hand side of the page, we have compiled a variety of Convention related useful materials, as well as links to several relevant organisations, which will help to further contextualise your research with other relevant international instruments, doctrine etc.

The Transversal Themes pages work exactly the same way.

This is the Immigration page, where you will find the case-law Guide, the relevant Updates and Key Themes.

As I said before, the regular update of the platform is the essence of the whole system and our Registry teams are working constantly to reflect the exact evolution of the Court's case-law on a weekly basis and to develop new Transversal Themes and Key Themes with a particular focus on emerging Human Rights issues.

We are convinced that, with these interfaces in English and French, the platform will already transform the dissemination, understanding and implementation of the Court's case-law at domestic level. But the real Copernican revolution will happen when first instance judges in Odessa, Izmir, Palermo and elsewhere will be able to use this tool, in their mother tongues, on a daily basis.

I will now leave the floor to my dear friend Director General Christos Giakoumopoulos who will explain in detail how DG1 is further developing this amazing project.

Thank you for your attention. Christos, the floor is yours.