

# European Convention on Human Rights



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE    CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## Article 2

### The right to life

On 4 November 1950, twelve states signed the European Convention on Human Rights, the landmark text of the Council of Europe which, for 60 years now, has been protecting the rights and freedoms of all human beings.

Any man, woman or child in one of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe can make a final appeal to the European Court of Human Rights if one of their fundamental rights has been violated.

The subjects examined by the Court include in particular the right to a fair trial, abortion, assisted suicide, adoption by homosexual couples, religious symbols at school and environmental matters. The Court ensures compliance with the Convention, the main articles of which are presented in this brochure.



This essential article requires states to protect the lives of all individuals by law and to prosecute anyone perpetrating assaults on persons, including those suspected of terrorism.

### Article 3

## Prohibition of torture

**NO ONE SHALL BE  
SUBJECTED TO  
TORTURE**



or to inhuman or degrading  
treatment or punishment

Respect for human dignity takes precedence even in cases of detention. This article also prohibits extraditing a person to another country where there is a risk that he or she will be subjected to torture or ill-treatment.

### Article 4


## Prohibition of slavery and forced labour

**No one shall  
be held in  
slavery  
or servitude**

States are required to guarantee individuals practical and effective protection against such acts. Military service, prison work, service imposed in cases of emergency or disaster and normal civic obligations are not considered as servitude or forced labour.

## Article 5

### The right to liberty and security




Everyone who is arrested is entitled to know why; he or she must be tried promptly or be released pending trial

This article is geared to protecting physical liberty and prohibiting any kind of arbitrary arrest or detention.

## Article 6

### The right to a fair trial



Everyone is entitled to a fair trial

Courts must be independent and impartial. Everyone charged with a criminal offence is presumed innocent until proved guilty, and is entitled to be defended by a lawyer, whose fees must be paid by the state if he/she cannot afford them.

## Article 8

### The right to respect for private and family life



States cannot interfere in any individual's private life, but they are simultaneously duty-bound to protect the moral and physical integrity of all individuals.

## Article 9

### Freedom of thought, conscience and religion



Article 9 protects the freedom to practice one's religion in private or in public and the right to change religion. States may not interfere in the internal affairs of a religious community.

## Article 10

### Freedom of expression



Freedom to express one's opinions or level criticism is essential in a democratic society. The media require particular protection in this context.

## Article 11

### Freedom of assembly and association



States must ensure that citizens are free to take part in peaceful demonstrations.

## Article 12

### The right to marry



This article concerns traditional marriage between a man and a woman. The Court has not yet extended this article to homosexual marriages, leaving it to the states to decide this question.

## Article 14 and Article 1 of Protocol No. 12

### Prohibition of discrimination



Prohibiting discrimination means reaffirming the equality principle, which states that all human beings are born and remain equal in rights and dignity. Protocol No. 12 extends the prohibition of discrimination to all legal rights protected by domestic law.

Article 1 of Protocol No. 1

## Protection of property



States must protect ownership rights. A citizen may, however, be deprived of his or her possessions for reasons of public interest.

Article 2 of Protocol No. 1

## The right to education



This article sets out the right of parents to educate their children in accordance with their own religious and philosophical convictions.



Article 3 of Protocol No.1

## The right to free elections



States are required to hold free elections at regular intervals by secret ballot in order to guarantee the free expression of their citizens' will.

Protocol No. 6 + No.13

## Abolition of the death penalty



Abolition of the death penalty is one of the conditions to be fulfilled in order to become a member of the Council of Europe (Protocol No. 6). Today, the death penalty in peacetime has been abolished throughout Europe. In accordance with Protocol No. 13, the abolition of the death penalty applies even in time of war.



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