European Master’s Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation

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Master’s Thesis

Litigation Practices of Non-Governmental Organisations Before the European Court of Human Rights

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Abstract

This thesis explores the litigation practices of non-governmental organisations dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights before the European Court of Human Rights. These practices encompass mainly the support to individuals and third party interventions. The involvement of NGOs plays a fundamental role in ensuring access of victims to the Court, creating a level playing field and representing the ‘public interest’ before it.

Although not well known, these practices are already rather developed and will probably increase. A survey conducted among litigating NGOs sheds light on the concrete way they work and shows that they have many incentives and objectives when going to Strasbourg, which also witnesses some of the Court’s strengths. However, they also face numerous challenges, principally due to the Court’s rules. Therefore, some suggestions to alleviate NGOs’ challenges are examined, as well as the advantages that cooperation with different actors and institutions dedicated to the promotion of human rights bring or could bring. These different points are also the occasion to look at the relationship between the Court and civil society and to call for its enhancement.
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List of Abbreviations

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI – National Human Rights Institution
ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR – European Court of Human Rights
CoE – Council of Europe
CoM – Committee of Ministers
P14 – Protocol 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights
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