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
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1

PART I: THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK .... 3
1. FOCI OF ANALYSIS AND RELEVANCE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ........ 3
   A. The Choice of the Forum: the European Court of Human Rights ............ 4
      1. The limited access of individuals to the Court ..................................... 4
      2. The inequality of arms ...................................................................... 5
      3. The absence of any kind of representation of the ‘public interest’ ...... 6
   B. The choice of the actor: Non-Governmental Organisations .................. 7
   C. Conclusion ................................................................................................. 9
2. METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY .................................................................... 9
   A. The sample ....................................................................................................... 10
   B. The content of the survey ........................................................................... 11
   C. The process ..................................................................................................... 12
3. CONTEXTUALISATION: PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION .............. 12
   A. Public Interest Litigation: an overview ...................................................... 13
      1. Notion ........................................................................................................ 13
      2. History ....................................................................................................... 14
      3. Theoretical approaches explaining the spread of public interest litigation 15
   B. Public Interest Litigation: Critiques .............................................................. 16
   C. Effectiveness of public interest litigation: the problem of assessment ...... 18

PART II: NGOs’ LITIGATION PROFILES AND PRACTICES .......... 21
4. THE “LITIGATION PROFILE” OF THE RESPONDENTS .......... 22
5. THE IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF CASES ............... 24
6. TYPES OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE ECtHR PROCEEDINGS ....... 25
   A. Support to victims ....................................................................................... 26
   B. Amicus curiae and third party interventions ............................................. 28
      1. Notion ........................................................................................................ 28
      2. Rules and Procedures ............................................................................. 29
3. Advantages and disadvantages ................................................................. 32
4. Evolution of the assumption of impartiality and neutrality ..................... 34
5. The practice of third interventions .......................................................... 35
6. Impact of third interventions ..................................................................... 36

PART III : NGOs MOTIVATIONS TO GO TO THE ECtHR ......................... 39

7. INCENTIVES TO GO TO THE ECtHR .................................................... 39
   A. The non-responsiveness or the opposition of other channels of influence ..... 40
   B. The near-precedential value of the Court’s decisions ............................. 40
   C. The perception that the Court is a partner in advancing the cause .......... 41
   D. The existence of a monitoring system following-up the Court’s decision .. 42
   E. The opportunity to raise public awareness and mobilise support .......... 43
   F. Presence at this level helps the organisation attract funding and legitimises its
goals ............................................................................................................. 45

8. PURSUED OBJECTIVES ............................................................................ 45
   A. To challenge laws, interpretations and practices; to establish a precedent and to
      influence the Court .................................................................................. 45
   B. To extend the interpretation of the European Convention ....................... 46
   C. To inform the Court .................................................................................. 47
   D. To help an individual who otherwise could not afford to be there ............ 47
   E. To send a signal to other States ................................................................. 47
   F. To document violation .............................................................................. 48
   G. Conclusion .................................................................................................. 48

PART IV: ANALYSIS OF NETWORKS ............................................................ 49

9. HUMAN RIGHTS LITIGATION: PATTERNS OF COOPERATION .......... 49
   A. Cooperation among Non Governmental Organisations ............................ 51
   B. Cooperation between NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions .... 52
   C. Cooperation with smaller grassroots organisations .................................. 53
   D. Cooperation with Legal Aid Agencies ....................................................... 55
   E. Cooperation with Pro Bono Lawyers ......................................................... 55
   F. Cooperation with Private Lawyers ............................................................ 58
   G. Cooperation with Private Public Interest Law Firms ............................... 58
H. Cooperation with Law School Clinics ................................................................. 59
I. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights............................ 62
J. Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 63

PART V: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS ................................................................. 65
10. CHALLENGES AND NGOs’ SUGGESTIONS TO ENHANCE THEIR
    RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ECtHR ................................................................. 65
A. Lengthy procedures before the Court ............................................................ 66
B. Lack of time to intervene and lack of information ................................ ........ 66
C. Restrictive rules on standing ....................................................................... 69
D. Lack of financial resources ............................................................................ 69
E. Lack of specialized in-house staff and lack of pro bono lawyers ................. 70
F. Reluctance of victims to take their case before the Court ............................. 70
G. Additional remarks made by groups ............................................................. 71
   1. The ‘languages’ challenge’ ......................................................................... 71
   2. Silent refused request for intervention ...................................................... 71
   3. A call for being invited .............................................................................. 72
   4. Better information on interventions by others ......................................... 73
H. Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 74
11. PROSPECTS ...................................................................................................... 74
A. Strike the iron while it is hot ........................................................................ 75
B. An increase in NGOs’ involvement ............................................................... 76
C. Lautsi v. Italy .................................................................................................. 77

CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 78

Bibliography .......................................................................................................... 83

Appendix 1: Third interventions before the European Court of Human Rights ...... 105
Appendix 2: Survey on litigation practices before the Eur. Court of Human Rights.. 113
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