



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

## PRACTICE DIRECTION<sup>1</sup>

### **INSTITUTION OF PROCEEDINGS<sup>2</sup>**

(Individual applications under Article 34 of the Convention)

#### **I. General**

1. An application under Article 34 of the Convention must be submitted in writing. No application may be made by telephone.

2. An application must be sent to the following address:

The Registrar  
European Court of Human Rights  
Council of Europe  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex.

3. An application should normally be made on the form<sup>3</sup> referred to in Rule 47 § 1 of the Rules of Court and be accompanied by the documents and decisions mentioned in Rule 47 § 1 (h).

Where an applicant introduces his or her application in a letter, such letter must set out, at least in summary form, the subject matter of the application in order to interrupt the running of the six-month rule contained in Article 35 § 1 of the Convention.

4. If an application has not been submitted on the official form or an introductory letter does not contain all the information referred to in Rule 47, the applicant may be required to submit a duly completed form. It must be despatched within eight weeks from the date of the Registry's letter requesting the applicant to complete and return the form.

Failure to comply with this time-limit will have implications for the date of introduction of the application and may therefore affect the applicant's compliance with the six-month rule contained in Article 35 § 1 of the Convention.

5. Applicants may file an application by sending it by fax<sup>4</sup>. However, they must despatch the signed original by post within eight weeks from the date of the Registry's letter referred to in paragraph 4 above.

6. Where, within six months of being asked to do so, an applicant has not returned a duly completed application form, the file will be destroyed.

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<sup>1</sup>. Issued by the President of the Court in accordance with Rule 32 of the Rules of Court on 1 November 2003 and amended on 22 September 2008 and on 24 June 2009.

<sup>2</sup>. This practice direction supplements Rules 45 and 47.

<sup>3</sup>. The relevant form can be downloaded from the Court's website.

<sup>4</sup>. Fax no. +33 (0)3 88 41 27 30; other fax numbers can be found on the Court's website.

7. On receipt of the first communication setting out the subject-matter of the case, the Registry will open a file, whose number must be mentioned in all subsequent correspondence. Applicants will be informed thereof by letter. They may also be asked for further information or documents.

8. (a) An applicant should be diligent in conducting correspondence with the Court's Registry.

(b) A delay in replying or failure to reply may be regarded as a sign that the applicant is no longer interested in pursuing his or her application.

9. Failure to provide further information or documents at the Registry's request (see paragraph 7) may result in the application not being examined by the Court or being declared inadmissible or struck out of the Court's list of cases.

## **II. Form and contents**

10. An application should be written legibly and, preferably, typed.

11. Where, exceptionally, an application exceeds ten pages (excluding annexes listing documents), an applicant must also file a short summary.

12. Where applicants produce documents in support of the application, they should not submit original copies. The documents should be listed in order by date, numbered consecutively and given a concise description (e.g., letter, order, judgment, appeal, etc.).

13. An applicant who already has an application pending before the Court must inform the Registry accordingly, stating the application number.

14. (a) Where an applicant does not wish to have his or her identity disclosed, he or she should state the reasons for his or her request in writing, pursuant to Rule 47 § 3.

(b) The applicant should also state whether, in the event of anonymity being authorised by the President of the Chamber, he or she wishes to be designated by his or her initials or by a single letter (e.g., "X", "Y", "Z", etc.)