

The European Court of Human Rights

By "European Court" most people mean the European Court of Human Rights. Note that this is not one of the institutions of the European Union, but an arm of the Council of Europe, a much larger organisation started after the Second World War.

The ECHR exists to enforce the European Convention on Human Rights. Until 2000, individuals could take cases the ECHR in Strasbourg. Since the Labour Government passed the UK Human Rights Act in 2000, the Convention is now written into UK law. This means that any case must first go through UK court system. Cases may still eventually end up in Strasbourg, but they take a long time and it is generally an expensive procedure. Generally, such cases are only undertaken by large organisations eg Trade unions on behalf of members. If you think you have a case which is covered by human rights legislation, you are strongly advised to take expert legal action.

MEPs are not lawyers so cannot advise as to the worth of any individual case.

Information on the [UK Human Rights Act](#).

Information on the [ECHR](#)

For more general advice on human rights, go to <http://www.yourrights.org.uk/>

The European Court of Justice

The European Court of Justice is an institution of the EU dealing with disputes and upholding the Treaties of the European Union. Its job is to ensure that European law is uniformly interpreted and applied throughout the 25 member states. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for an individual's case to go to the ECJ. However, expert legal advice should be taken.