

# ASSEDEL

# Activity Report

# 2025



**Association européenne  
pour la défense  
des droits et des libertés**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 01 SUBMISSIONS

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

EUROPEAN PARLIMENT

UNITED NATIONS



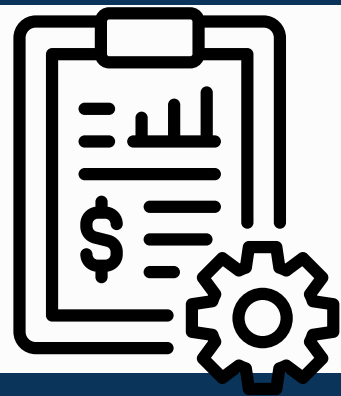
## 02 OPINIONS

## 03 INTERVIEWS



## 04 EVENTS

## 05 PROJECTS



## 06 TRAINING SESSIONS



**01**

# **SUBMISSIONS**



# COUNCIL OF EUROPE



JANUARY 13, 2025

In its commentary, ASSEDEL commends the UK's legislative strides but also highlights key gaps, particularly in maternity pay and its accessibility for low-income women. The report underscores the inadequacy of maternity benefits, especially after the initial six weeks, and points out challenges in enforcement mechanisms that rely heavily on individual complaints.

Regarding domestic violence, ASSEDEL acknowledges the positive steps, such as the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and funding for survivor support, but stresses the need for more transparency in assessing the impact of these measures. ASSEDEL calls for more inclusive and comprehensive policies, better monitoring, and a more transparent approach to ensure long-term effectiveness in tackling gender-based violence.

READ: 1623



**JANUARY 14, 2025**

Yüksel Yalçinkaya was working as a teacher before the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. On account of his suspected affiliation with the Gülen Movement, he was first dismissed from service by Legislative Decree no. 672, and later, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2016, he was arrested.

The 2023 Grand Chamber judgment found violations of Article 6(1), Article 7, and Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The judgment indicated that claims by the Turkish state that alleged crimes committed by Mr. Yalçinkaya lacked legality and foreseeability, thus constituting a violation of Article 7 (*nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege*). The allegations against the applicant were based on his alleged online activity on the ByLock application, linking him directly to membership in an armed terrorist organization and involvement in the hierarchical structure of FETÖ/PDY, claims which the applicant consistently denied, stating that he never downloaded the app.

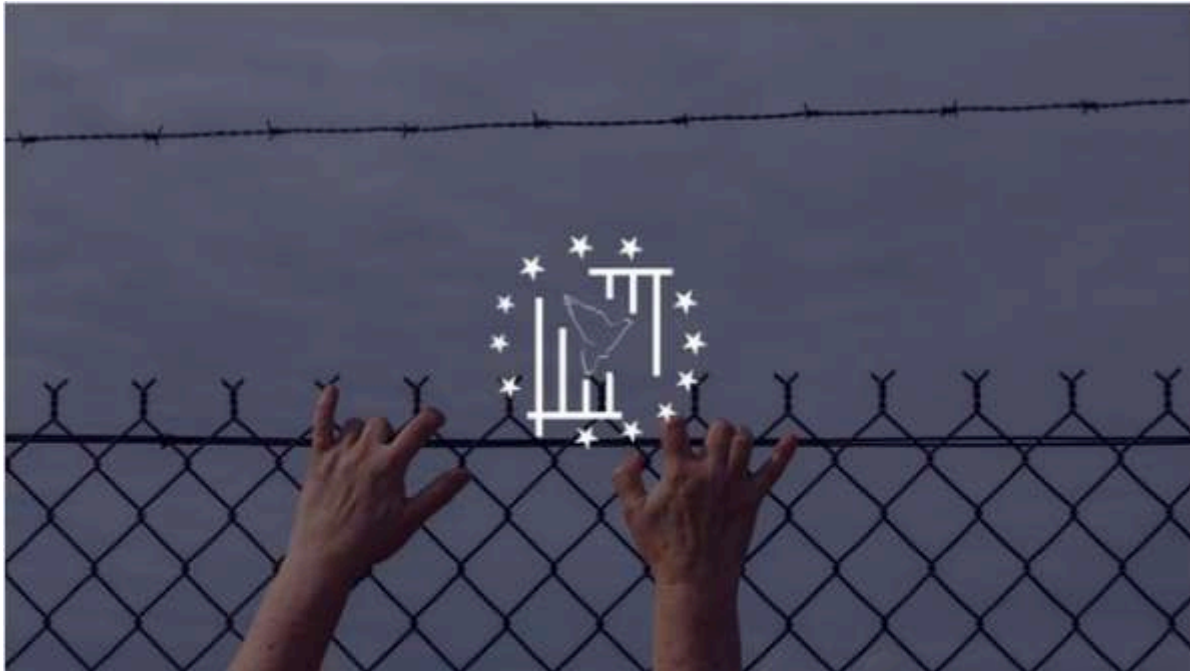


### **ASSEDEL Submits Observations to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers Under Rule 9.2**

Following the retrial of Mr. Yalçinkaya, the judgment of the Kayseri Second Assize Court reveals that the Turkish judiciary is hesitant to enforce the Court's judgment.

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**READ: 1710**



## **Addressing the Challenges of Syrian Refugees in Europe following the statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe**

ASSEDEL has reviewed the challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Europe, analyzing policies across five key countries: France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.

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**JANUARY 31, 2025**

In its commentary, ASSEDEL acknowledges the efforts made by these nations in providing asylum and integration support but highlights critical gaps, particularly in housing, employment access, and social cohesion. The report underscores the disparities in asylum procedures, the inadequacy of reception conditions in some regions, and the inconsistencies in legal protections, especially concerning the unequal application of EU asylum policies.

Regarding integration, ASSEDEL commends initiatives like Germany's vocational training programs and the Netherlands' employment-focused approach but stresses the need for more uniform policies across Europe. It calls for improved funding for housing, streamlined asylum processes, and expanded support services to foster long-term refugee inclusion.

The commentary highlights the importance of a coordinated European approach, stronger refugee protections, and sustained efforts to combat xenophobia, ensuring meaningful and lasting improvements in the lives of Syrian refugees

**READ: 2434**



MAY 20, 2025


While Italy has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and adopted relevant national legislation—such as Law No. 69/2019 (Codice Rosso)—the implementation of these norms remains inconsistent. Gaps are particularly evident in prevention strategies, support mechanisms for victims, and the coordination between judicial and social services.

Data from recent years reveal an upward trend in the number of women accessing anti-violence centers, suggesting both a rise in awareness and a continued prevalence of abuse. However, low reporting rates, institutional under-responsiveness, and persistent stereotypes highlight the limitations of existing measures. In educational settings, workplaces, and even within law enforcement, awareness and training on gender-based violence remain insufficient.



### **Violence against women and sexual assault in Italy: Potential Issues related to the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on...**

Violence against women in Italy persists as a critical human rights issue, despite notable advancements in the legal and institutional framework.

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READ: 998



ASSEDEL, L'Association européenne pour la défense des droits et des libertés  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

Strasbourg, 30 May 2025

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**ASSEDEL Expresses Concern over Joint Government Letter Addressed to  
the European Court of Human Rights**

*Call to uphold judicial independence and the integrity of the European human rights  
protection system*

## **L'ASSEDEL s'inquiète de l'initiative gouvernementale visant la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme**

Le 27 mai 2025, l'ASSEDEL – l'Association Européenne pour la Défense des Droits et des Libertés – a publié une déclaration exprimant sa vive inquiétude suite à une lettre conjointe, émise par neuf États membres du Conseil de l'Europe, qui...



### **JUNE 6, 2025**

On 27 May 2025, ASSEDEL – l'Association Européenne pour la Défense des Droits et des Libertés – published a statement expressing deep concern over a joint letter issued by nine Council of Europe member states calling for a reinterpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights by the European Court of Human Rights.

In its statement, ASSEDEL reaffirms the vital importance of judicial independence and the role of the Court as the cornerstone of Europe's human rights protection system. The association urges all democratic actors to stand in defence of the Court's authority and calls for vigilance in the face of growing political pressure.

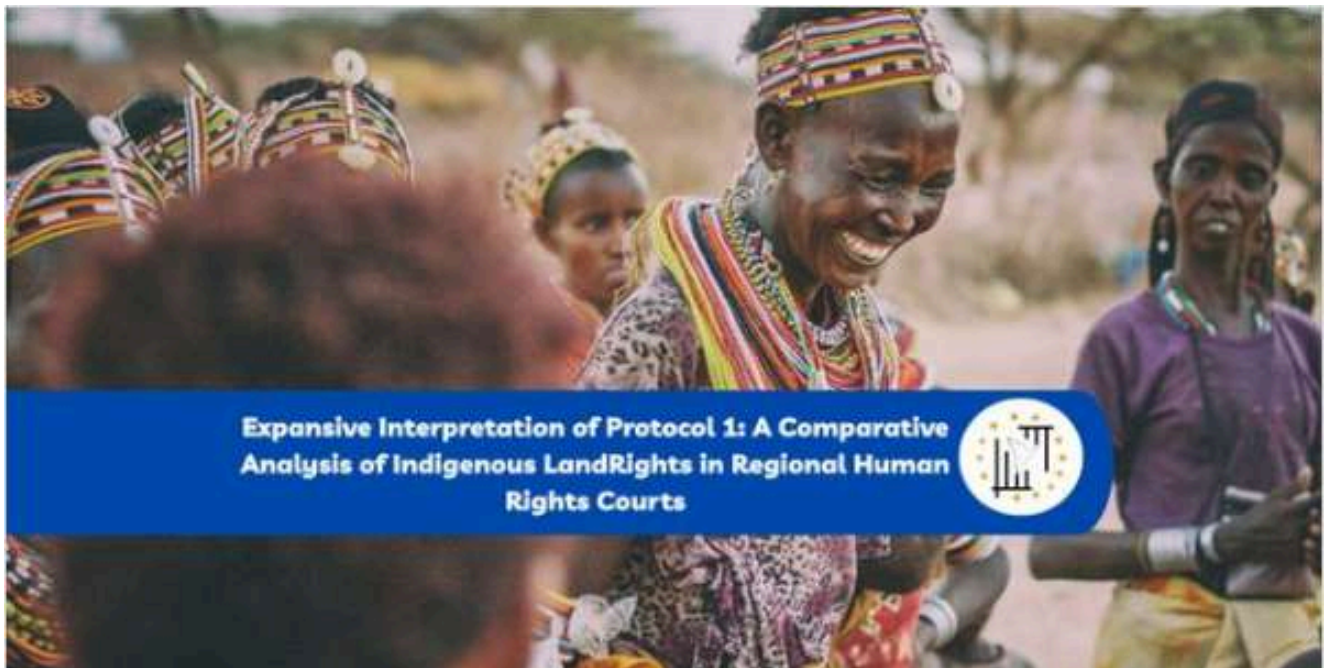
You can read the full press release [here](#).



**JUNE 10, 2025**

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) have taken markedly different approaches to Indigenous land disputes, as illustrated by the cases *Handölsdalen Sami Village v. Sweden* (2010) and *Lhaka Honhat v. Argentina* (2020). While the ECtHR narrowly assessed procedural fairness and formal property rights under Article 1 of Protocol No. 1, the IACtHR recognized collective land tenure, cultural survival, and positive state obligations.

ASSEDEL's report examines these divergent rulings, emphasizing the ECtHR's reliance on domestic legal frameworks and the IACtHR's embrace of Indigenous customary rights and international standards like UNDRIP and ILO Convention No. 169. The analysis highlights key differences in evidential flexibility, legal subjectivity, and remedial measures, proposing reforms to align the ECtHR's jurisprudence with the needs of Indigenous communities.



## **Interprétation extensive du Protocole 1 : une analyse comparative des droits fonciers autochtones dans les tribunaux régionaux des droits...**

La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH) et la Cour interaméricaine des droits de l'homme (IACtHR) ont adopté des approches très différentes des conflits fonciers autochtones, comme illustré by the cases *Handölsdalen Sami Village v...*

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


## Comments and recommendations for the Hungarian draft law on the “Transparency of public life”



### Commentaires et recommandations sur le projet de loi hongrois sur la « Transparence de la vie publique »

Ce rapport de l'ASSEDEL (L'Association européenne pour la défense des droits et des libertés) examine d'un œil critique le projet de loi hongrois intitulé « Transparence dans la vie publique », déposé le 13 mai 2025 par le parti au pouvoir...

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#### JUNE 17, 2025

This report by ASSEDEL (L'Association européenne pour la défense des droits et des libertés) critically scrutinizes the Hungarian draft law entitled on “Transparency in the Public life,” submitted on 13 May 2025 by the ruling Fidesz Party.

Despite its innocuous-sounding title, the proposed legislation constitutes the most far-reaching assault on civil society, media freedom, and liberal democracy in Hungary since Viktor Orbán's return to power.

Most damning are the sweeping powers the draft law grants to the Hungarian Sovereignty Protection Office, enabling it to surveil, blacklist, financially penalize and dissolve any organizations deemed a threat to Hungarian “sovereignty” – a term left dangerously vague. These powers are granted without adequate legal safeguards, and appeals are routed through the Hungarian Supreme Court (the Kúria), a judiciary whose independence has been increasingly compromised.

The draft law targets organizations receiving minimal foreign funding, including from EU sources, and imposes harsh sanctions without procedural safeguards or meaningful legal remedy.


This report demonstrates that the draft law contravenes fundamental freedoms enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, as well as the binding case law of the European Court of Justice. It further highlights the draft law's misuse of anti-money laundering frameworks for political purposes and its serious implications for the EU as a single market, particularly for the free movement of capital and services.





## Lettre de l'ASSEDEL au Comité des Ministres

En juin 2025, le Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe a tenu sa 1531<sup>e</sup> réunion sur les droits de l'homme pour superviser l'exécution de l'arrêt *Yalçinkaya c.*

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### JUNE 24, 2025

In June 2025, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe held its 1531st Human Rights meeting to supervise the execution of the *Yalçinkaya v. Türkiye* judgment, a landmark ruling of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) that revealed systemic issues in Türkiye's use of anti-terror legislation.

In response to the Committee's decision adopted during this session, ASSEDEL has issued a formal assessment highlighting its deep concerns regarding the lack of substantive progress in Türkiye's implementation of the judgment. Despite the enhanced supervision procedure, the Committee's decision appeared overly optimistic and omitted key facts—most notably the continued prosecution and conviction of individuals based on evidentiary practices previously condemned by the ECtHR.

This letter, authored by ASSEDEL's Secretary General, provides a detailed analysis of the legal and structural shortcomings that persist in Türkiye. It emphasizes that the domestic judiciary has failed to align with the Convention standards, and that Mr. Yüksel Yalçinkaya—whose case prompted the ECtHR judgment—remains convicted, contrary to the principle of *restitutio in integrum*.

**JULY 3, 2025**

Democratic processes in times of crisis face heightened challenges that threaten the stability and legitimacy of electoral systems across Europe and beyond. Political competition intensifies, often leading to strategic behaviours by actors that may undermine public trust and institutional resilience.

While various countries have adopted reforms aimed at improving transparency and voter participation, the implementation of these measures remains uneven. Particular gaps exist in managing the fragility of voting systems, ensuring fair competition, and safeguarding democratic accountability under conditions of political instability.

Recent studies highlight increasing electoral volatility, narrow margins in closely contested races, and the growing influence of external factors such as media framing and civil society actors. These trends underscore the complex dynamics shaping elections in crisis contexts and the risks of unpredictable or counterintuitive outcomes.



**Elections in Times of Crisis**

Democratic processes in times of crisis face heightened challenges that threaten the stability and legitimacy of electoral systems across Europe and beyond. Political competition intensifies, often leading to strategic behaviours by actors that may...

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**READ: 866**





## Human rights at risk: an analysis of the Italian Security Bill (Decreto Sicurezza) and its impact on fundamental freedoms

The enactment of the Italian Security Bill (Decreto Sicurezza), formalized through Decree-Law No. 48 of 11 April 2025 and later converted into Law No. 80 of 9 June 2025, represents a critical juncture in the interplay between public security, crimin...

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**JULY 17, 2025**

The enactment of the Italian Security Bill (Decreto Sicurezza), formalized through Decree-Law No. 48 of 11 April 2025 and later converted into Law No. 80 of 9 June 2025, represents a critical juncture in the interplay between public security, criminal policy, and fundamental freedoms. Framed by the government as a necessary response to growing concerns over public order and institutional integrity, the law introduces far-reaching changes to the criminal code and administrative powers. These measures, while presented under the guise of enhancing safety and efficiency, have triggered significant debate within legal circles, civil society, and international human rights institutions regarding their compatibility with constitutional guarantees and European human rights standards.

This policy paper seeks to examine the Security Bill in light of Italy's constitutional framework and its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Particular attention is devoted to the principles of legality, proportionality, and judicial oversight, as well as to the broader implications for democratic participation and the right to dissent. Through a critical review of national jurisprudence, official reports, and case-law from the European Court of Human Rights, this analysis highlights the systemic risks posed by the expanding resort to penal instruments and emergency legislation in managing social and political conflict.

As live facial recognition (LFR) becomes more common in public spaces across the United Kingdom, critical questions are being raised about its legality, accuracy, and impact on human rights. A recent policy report sheds light on how law enforcement's use of LFR operates in a legal grey area—one that leaves individuals vulnerable to privacy violations, racial profiling, and unwarranted surveillance.

### What is Live Facial Recognition (LFR)?

LFR systems scan faces in real time using cameras in public areas—such as city centres, sports events, or transport hubs—and match them against police watchlists. While promoted as tools for crime prevention and public safety, the increasing routine use of this technology signals a concerning shift from exceptional policing to blanket biometric surveillance.

### Legal Loopholes and Weak Oversight

There is currently no UK law specifically authorizing or regulating police use of facial recognition technology. Instead, police rely on general principles of data protection, human rights, and internal policies—many of which lack enforceability. In 2020, the Court of Appeal ruled in the *Bridges v. South Wales Police* case that such use of LFR violated privacy rights due to unclear rules and unchecked police discretion. Yet, despite this ruling, deployments continue under fragmented and ambiguous guidelines.



## Artificial Intelligence and the Law: The Need to Strengthen the Existing Regulatory Framework for Live Facial Recognition by Law...

As live facial recognition (LFR) becomes more common in public spaces across the United Kingdom, critical questions are being raised about its legality, accuracy, and impact on human rights.




# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



## **An evaluation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025**

Notwithstanding decades of anti-discrimination laws, racial and ethnic minorities across Europe continue to face persistent barriers to equality. In response, the EU launched its Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025, aiming to tackle both overt and...

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**JULY 9, 2025**

In this report, ASSEDEL (L'Association européenne pour la défense des droits et des libertés) subjects the Action Plan to critical scrutiny. Our assessment highlights the Plan's strengths, including its holistic and intersectional approach, commitment to legal reform, and emphasis on structural change. However, the report further exposes important limitations, notably uneven implementation across countries, under-resourced equality bodies, gaps in data collection, and a lack of binding measures to address new forms of discrimination such as algorithmic bias in AI.

**READ: 885**

# UNITED NATIONS

JUNE 19, 2025

In today's rapidly changing world, the protection of human rights depends on strong cooperation between international institutions. Two of the most important actors in this field, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UN HRC) and the Council of Europe (CoE), share a deep commitment to defending human dignity, democracy, and the rule of law. Yet, despite these common goals, the two institutions often work in parallel rather than in partnership.

This policy paper by ASSEDEL explores how the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) could strengthen its relationship with the UN Human Rights Council to make human rights protections in Europe more consistent and effective. By encouraging greater coordination, shared initiatives, and formal communication channels, this paper outlines concrete proposals to bring these two bodies closer together.

From joint evaluations of human rights conditions in member states to improved participation in UN review processes, the recommendations aim to create a more unified response to today's challenges—from war and migration to freedom of expression and judicial independence. The paper also highlights how civil society and parliamentary actors can play a greater role in shaping decisions that affect the rights of millions across Europe and beyond.

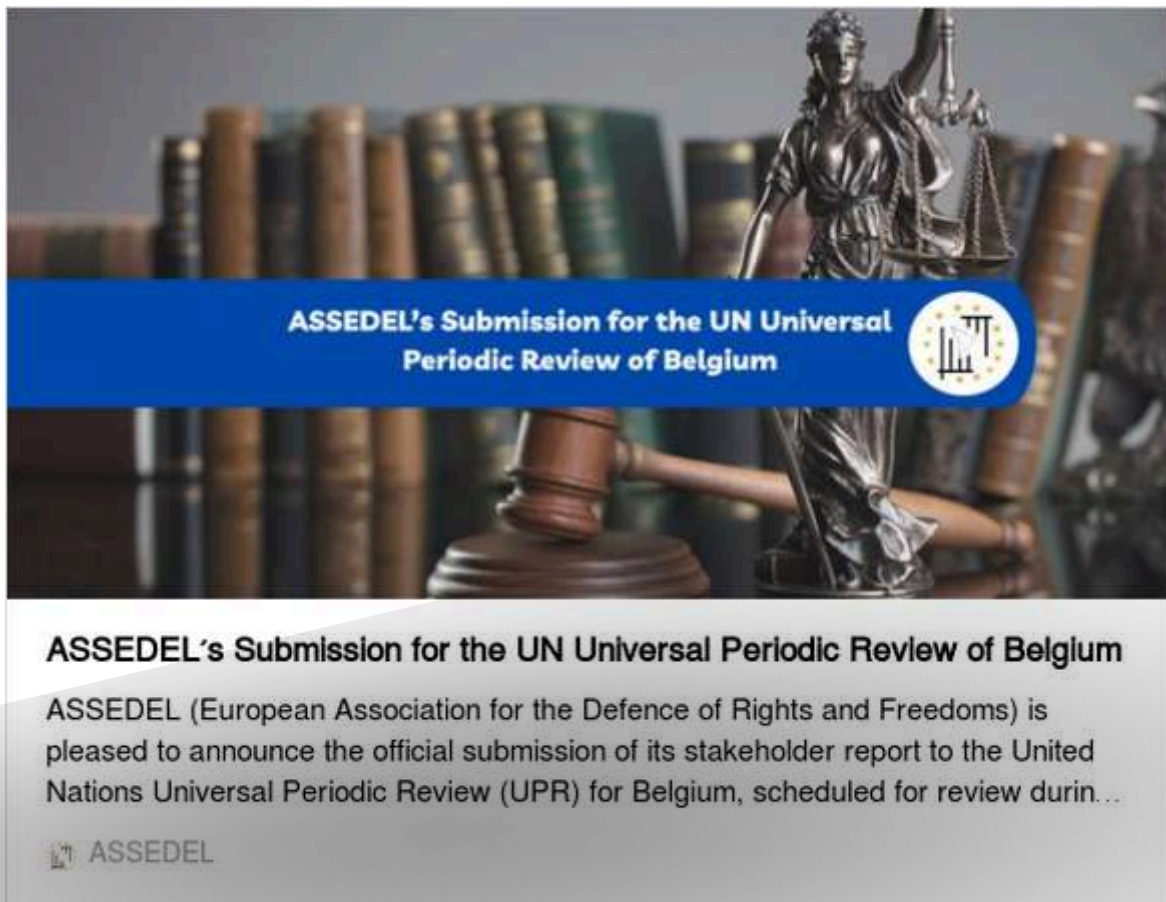


## Façonner les relations de l'Assemblée parlementaire avec le Conseil des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies

Dans le monde actuel en rapide mutation, la protection des droits de l'homme dépend d'une forte coopération entre les institutions internationales. Deux des acteurs les plus importants dans ce domaine, le Conseil des droits de l'homme de...

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**JUNE 27, 2025**

ASSEDEL (European Association for the Defence of Rights and Freedoms) is pleased to announce the official submission of its stakeholder report to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Belgium, scheduled for review during the 52nd session of the UPR Working Group in May 2026.

As part of the Fourth Cycle of the UPR, our report focuses on critical civil and political rights concerns in Belgium, with particular attention to the administration of justice, conditions of detention, and the protection of vulnerable groups.

The report highlights systemic issues such as the lack of transparency in automated judicial decision-making, the continued detention of mentally ill offenders in inadequate prison conditions, and overcrowding in Belgian prisons, which has led to repeated findings of degrading treatment. It also examines digital exclusion from justice processes, particularly for incarcerated persons, and Belgium's recurring failure to implement interim measures ordered by the European Court of Human Rights in asylum and detention-related cases. Together, these concerns reflect serious challenges to fair trial rights, access to justice, and compliance with international legal obligations.

**READ: 1043**

**JUNE 30, 2025**

This report explores why Sweden, a country widely recognized for its commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, has become one of the most frequent subjects of complaints submitted to the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT).


These complaints do not concern acts of torture taking place within Sweden. Instead, they involve situations where Swedish authorities have ordered the deportation of asylum seekers who state they face a real risk of torture if returned to their countries of origin. In such cases, Sweden may be found in violation of Article 3 of the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT), which prohibits the return or expulsion of individuals to states where they are at risk of being subjected to torture.

Between July 2021 and November 2024, Sweden accounted for a disproportionately high number of individual complaints submitted to the CAT. This report examines whether this high volume of cases reflects deficiencies in how Sweden fulfills its obligations under the Convention, whether the violations point to deeper structural issues, or whether the numbers instead reflect a functioning legal system where individuals are able to access international legal mechanisms for protection.



## **From Rule of Law to Risk of Torture? Sweden Before the UN Committee Against Torture**

This report explores why Sweden, a country widely recognized for its commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, has become one of the most frequent subjects of complaints submitted to the United Nations Committee Against Torture...

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**READ: 1062**





## REFUGEE RIGHTS IN GREECE

SUBMISSION OF ASSEDEL FOR THE UN UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW FOR GREECE, 52nd SESSION OF THE UPR WORKING GROUP, May 2026 Over the past decade, Greece has become a primary entry point into the European Union f...

 ASSEDEL /

**OCTOBER 14, 2025**

Over the past decade, Greece has become a primary entry point into the European Union for refugees and migrants, particularly along the Eastern Mediterranean route. Despite its strategic importance, Greece continues to face serious challenges in ensuring humane reception conditions, fair asylum procedures, and respect for the principle of non-refoulement.

### Current Situation

According to UNHCR and Eurostat, Greece received around 50,000 asylum applications in 2023, placing Greece among the top EU receiving countries relative to its population size. More than 60,000 refugees and asylum seekers currently reside in the country. While many live on the mainland, severe overcrowding persists in the Aegean islands of Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Kos, and Leros.

### Detention Conditions

Greek detention and reception centres have been repeatedly criticized by the Council of Europe, UN bodies, and NGOs for inhumane and overcrowded conditions. Reports highlight unsanitary facilities, inadequate healthcare, and psychological distress among detainees. Vulnerable groups—particularly women, children, and persons with disabilities—face heightened risks of violence and neglect. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has condemned Greece for violations of the prohibition of ill-treatment, including a 2023 ruling concerning conditions in the Samos “hotspot.” Administrative detention can last up to 18 months, often in prison-like facilities. In some cases, unaccompanied minors are held in so-called “safe zones”, often inaccessible to NGOs or independent monitors.



**NOVEMBER 3, 2025**

For years, the Netherlands has prided itself on its strong human rights tradition, however images released in the summer of 2022 from the small northern town of Ter Apel told a different story. Hundreds of asylum seekers, including families with toddlers, unaccompanied minors and pregnant women, were forced to sleep outside the national registration centre for several nights. In one of Europe's wealthiest nations, people seeking safety were left lying on the grass without shelter, food or sanitation.

What began as a shocking moment of public outrage has since hardened into a structural failure. Three years later, the Dutch asylum system remains overcrowded, overstretched and, according to national courts and oversight bodies, dangerously close to breaching basic human rights obligations.

### **A Crisis That Never Ended**

By 2025, nearly 77,000 people were living in asylum facilities that were not designed for such high capacity. Many were housed in converted gyms, tents or empty office buildings, and roughly 40 percent remained in emergency "crisisnoodopvang" shelters that were intended for temporary use. Inspectors from the Health and Youth Care Inspectorate (IGJ) described "hygiene that leaves much to be desired" and "little to no privacy," while the National Ombudsman warned that "fundamental rights are being violated because essential provisions are missing."

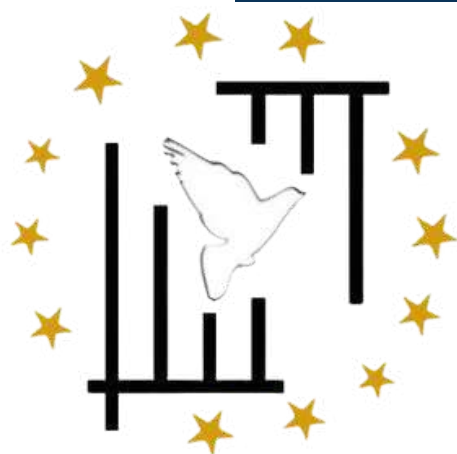
**READ: 392**



### **At the Edge of Dignity: Inside the Netherlands' Asylum Crisis**

For years, the Netherlands has prided itself on its strong human rights tradition, however images released in the summer of 2022 from the small northern town of Ter Apel told a different story. Hundreds of asylum seekers, including families with...

 ASSEDEL /



# 02 OPINIONS







### **"Elmasry's Release: Italy's Decision in Light of the ICC Warrant, Legal Missteps and Human Rights Concerns"**

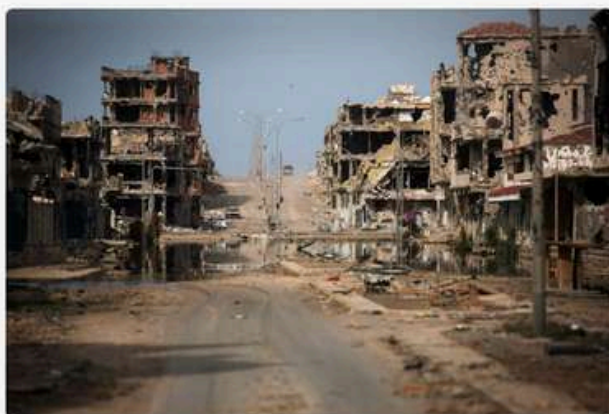
On 18 January 2025, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC), by majority, issued a warrant of arrest for Mr. Osama Elmasry Njeem, also known as Osama Almasri Njeem, in the Situation in Libya.

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**FEBRUARY 3, 2025**

On 18 January 2025, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC), by majority, issued a warrant of arrest for Mr. Osama Elmasry Njeem, also known as Osama Almasri Njeem, in the Situation in Libya.

Elmasry Njeem is a member of RADA, a private military group that actually represents public Libyan institutions because of the lack of state sovereignty since the 2011 civil war.



The suspect has worked since 2016 as head of police in Mitiga prison which is known by independent Fact finding mission established by the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) as a place of several human rights violations like torture and sexual abuses. Once the ICC found out that the crimes, taken place in Mitiga prison, were committed or ordered directly by Mr. Njeem, issued an arrest warrant for: war crimes of outrages upon personal dignity, of cruel treatment, of torture, of rape and sexual violence and of murder.



FEBRUARY 14, 2025

The rise of far-right and anti-immigrant sentiment in Germany coincides with the following years of 2015. Although, the German public opinion towards hosting people displaced due to wars had been favored, for several reasons this opinion has seen a gradual shift. According to the poll conducted by German public broadcaster ARD, the annual Deutschlandtrend survey states 62% of Germans are concerned about Germany taking more refugees [1].

Following the violent attack in Aschaffenburg, carried out by a 28-year-old Afghan man which resulted in the killing of a two-year-old boy and a man, Merz proposed a five-point plan to limit immigration to Germany and start deporting people.

Seeking to limit immigration to Germany and leveraging public dissent for his election campaign, Merz presented his plan at the Bundestag. He could only pass the motion with the votes coming from the AfD. This is the first time in post-war German political history that a German political party gets votes from a far-right party to pass a motion or a law at the Bundestag. Some people, both at the parliament and in the public, view this as a cracking of the “firewall”.



**Immigration Policy Debate  
before the German Federal Elections**

**Germany's Immigration Debate: Is the Political Firewall Cracking**

The rise of far-right and anti-immigrant sentiment in Germany coincides with the following years of 2015. Although, the German public opinion towards hosting people displaced due to wars had been favored, for several reasons this opinion...

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READ: 2060





## "AI Act: a front to counter the mass surveillance inspired by the Chinese model"

In recent years, the use of artificial intelligence has raised increasing concerns, particularly regarding potential abuses related to social surveillance systems, such as those already implemented in countries like China. In these contexts, technolog...

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FEBRUARY 21, 2025

In recent years, the use of artificial intelligence has raised increasing concerns, particularly regarding potential abuses related to social surveillance systems, such as those already implemented in countries like China. In these contexts, technology is often used to monitor and control daily lives of citizens, undermining their freedom and privacy. In order to counter these risks, Europe has embarked on a legislative journey with the AI Act, a piece of legislation that aims not only to regulate the use of artificial intelligence, but also to counter invasive forms of surveillance and protect citizens' fundamental rights. The AI Act, in fact, aims to ensure the ethical use of artificial intelligence, promoting a model of 'trusted AI' that respects the principles of transparency, fairness and non-discrimination.

The path towards the approval of this law began in 2018, when the European Commission set up an expert group on artificial intelligence; this group drafted ethical guidelines for AI in Europe, identifying the concept of 'trustworthy AI' as the only acceptable model in member countries.

Subsequently, the proposed regulation was presented by the European Commission on 21 April 2021 with the intention of creating a harmonised and proportionate regulatory framework for artificial intelligence within the European Union.

READ: 1943





## The European Court of Human Rights and the Rising Threat of Extremism

Europe stands at a crossroads. Extremist political parties are no longer isolated movements: they're increasingly winning the electorate. Every election serves as a grim reminder of how far-right and ultra-nationalist ideologies are proliferating the...

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FEBRUARY 24, 2025

Europe stands at a crossroads. Extremist political parties are no longer isolated movements: they're increasingly winning the electorate. Every election serves as a grim reminder of how far-right and ultra-nationalist ideologies are proliferating the political discourse. The stakes have never been higher, and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) finds itself at the frontline, guarding the very foundation of democracy.

This report delves into the pivotal role the ECtHR plays in regulating extremist political parties under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). With provisions like Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association), the Court has set legal boundaries for political expression. Landmark rulings such as *Refah Partisi v. Turkey*, *Herri Batasuna v. Spain*, and *Vona v. Hungary* expose the fragile tension between upholding fundamental freedoms and defending democratic values. But as the extremism contagion spreads, one burning question persists: Is our legal framework enough to halt the rise?

As we navigate through the digital age, the internet and social media have become a catalyst for radicalization, with hate speech flowing. The political discourse is being polarized and manipulated. Movements once considered unthinkable are now gaining traction. This report explores how modern extremist parties have reinvented themselves, adapting to new rhetoric.

Yet, are legal measures enough to counter extremism? The fight for democracy transcends the courtroom; it demands a shift in societal consciousness. Legal frameworks alone might not be enough and Europe requires a collective reckoning with a societal response. How can Europe stand firm against rising extremism if its rulings seem obsolete and its social responses remain apathetic?

READ: 1545



The European Union (EU) has once again attempted to fix its broken asylum system. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, introduced in 2020, is the latest attempt to impose order on what EU policymakers see as a chaotic and unmanageable influx of migrants. While the pact is marketed as a solution to promote solidarity among member states and streamline border procedures, its legal safeguards—or lack thereof—raise serious human rights concerns.

For decades, the EU has struggled to strike a balance between national security concerns and its obligation to protect asylum seekers. The infamous Dublin system, which placed the burden of processing asylum applications primarily on border states like Greece and Italy, was widely criticized. The 2015 migration crisis exposed its deep flaws. The EU's response? A new set of rules that, rather than addressing past mistakes, doubles down on policies that risk eroding fundamental rights.

### Screening at the Border: A New Bureaucratic Maze

One of the most concerning elements of the New Pact is the proposed Screening Regulation, which establishes a pre-entry screening process for all third-country nationals arriving at EU borders. This might sound like a logical way to manage migration, but the reality is far grimmer. The regulation effectively treats all arrivals as potential security threats, denying them official entry into EU territory until they pass through a bureaucratic maze of identity checks, security screenings, and eligibility



### The EU's Migration Pact: A Step Forward or a Human Rights Setback?

The European Union (EU) has once again attempted to fix its broken asylum system. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, introduced in 2020, is the latest attempt to impose order on what EU policymakers see as a chaotic and...





## Greece's Non-Compliance with International Refugee Law: Systematic Pushbacks and Legal Violations



### Greece's Non-Compliance with International Refugee Law: Systematic Pushbacks and Legal Violations

Greece's handling of asylum seekers has become a growing human rights concern, with systematic pushbacks and inhumane treatment of refugees raising serious legal and ethical questions.

 ASSEDEL

FEBRUARY 28, 2025

Greece's handling of asylum seekers has become a growing human rights concern, with systematic pushbacks and inhumane treatment of refugees raising serious legal and ethical questions. Despite being bound by international and EU laws, Greek authorities continue to forcefully expel asylum seekers without properly assessing their claims.

Reports from UNHCR, Amnesty International, and the Council of Europe reveal a disturbing pattern of illegal expulsions, excessive force, and denial of asylum rights, directly violating the principle of non-refoulement—which protects people from being sent back to places where they could face persecution, torture, or mistreatment.

At the same time, conditions inside Greek refugee camps remain dire. Thousands of people live in overcrowded shelters with little access to food, clean water, medical care, or legal assistance. Instead of finding safety, many asylum seekers are trapped in a cycle of neglect, abuse, and legal uncertainty.

Despite EU funding and international pressure, Greek authorities have failed to improve these conditions, leaving refugees to survive in unsanitary, unsafe, and degrading environments.

MARCH 3, 2025

## Introduction


On 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine and started a conflict which will be remembered through the years as an aggressive action that has brought back war to the European continent. After 3 years of slow but constant stabilization of the conflict with decreasing hopes to establish negotiation tables, Trump's arrival in the White House in January 2025 seemed like a political earthquake. Since the electoral campaign Trump has promised to be able to set an end to the *Ukraine-Russia conflict* and, once president on 20<sup>th</sup> of January, he has implemented a series of executive orders that underline a turning point for *US* politics and for the global system. This change should be also analyzed from a foreign political point of view; indeed it is leading to a shift in the balance of power within international relations with allies and competitors. February 2025 has been proving this shift; in less than 3 weeks the transatlantic alliance and the balance of Ukraine war has been overturned by the new authoritarian Trump approach.

Although we are living in a world already ruled by disinformation and manipulation, *ASSEDEL* wants to make order on the facts line, retracing step by step all the causes which have led to a rift within the transatlantic alliance and Ukraine supports.



## Rift within Transatlantic Alliance: Munich Security Conference and Ukraine war

On 24th of February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine and started a conflict which will be remembered through the years as an aggressive action that has brought back war to the European continent. After 3 years of slow but constant stabilization of th...

 ASSEDEL

READ: 1378





## Malala Yousafzai: The Girl Who Defied the Odds and Became a Global Beacon for Women's Rights

One of the most inspiring figures who embodies the strength, courage, and determination of women is Malala Yousafzai.

 ASSEDEL

MARCH 10, 2025

One of the most inspiring figures who embodies the strength, courage, and determination of women is Malala Yousafzai. Known for her activism in advocating for girls' education, Malala's journey from a young girl in Pakistan to the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate is a testament to the power of hope, advocacy, and unwavering belief in the right to education for all.

Born in Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan, on July 12, 1997, Malala Yousafzai's path to becoming a global icon of women's rights began at a young age. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, an educator and social activist, played a pivotal role in fostering her love for education. Malala's passion for learning grew stronger as she witnessed the challenges faced by girls in her community, especially under the rule of the Taliban, who had banned girls from attending school in the Swat Valley.

In 2009, at the age of 11, Malala wrote a blog under a pseudonym for the BBC Urdu, detailing life under the oppressive regime and her desire for girls to receive an education. This marked the beginning of her journey as an outspoken advocate for girls' rights and education. As she continued to speak out, Malala became a symbol of resistance to the Taliban's brutal policies.

READ: 16529

MARCH 17, 2025

Melek İpek was once known only to those familiar with her work as a philanthropist, and those who knew her as the matriarch of the İpek Media Group. However, in 2015, when trustees were forcibly appointed to seize her family company, her name began to resonate far beyond those circles. First, among the employees and readers resisting the takeover, and soon across the entire country. Indeed, with her unwavering stance, her fair and courageous demeanor, and her speeches, that always called for peace, she captured attention from all sides.

İpek Media Group—home to Bugün and Millet newspapers, Kanaltürk and Bugün TV, and Kanaltürk radio—first came under attack on September 1, 2015, when police raided its headquarters, seizing digital archives.

Weeks later, on October 27, 2015, the government-appointed trustees moved into take full control. The following night, riot police and armored water cannons (TOMA) stormed the media group's offices in Mecidiyeköy, Istanbul. Tear gas and arrests crushed the employees' resistance, and within hours, editorial policies were forcibly rewritten. The next morning, October 29—Republic Day in Turkey—marked the first day of a silenced press.

READ: 1769



### **Melek İpek : a Matriarch, a Philanthropist, and a Prisoner of Conscience**

Melek İpek was once known only to those familiar with her work as a philanthropist, and those who knew her as the matriarch of the İpek Media Group. However, in 2015, when trustees were forcibly appointed to seize her family company, her na...

ASSEDEL





## The Rémi Fraisse Case: A Historic Ruling Against France in Law Enforcement Management

Rémi Fraisse, a 21-year-old environmental activist, lost his life on the night of October 25-26, 2014, during clashes surrounding the construction site of the Sivens dam in the Tarn region. He was killed by the explosion of an offensive grenade...

 ASSEDEL

MARCH 18, 2025

Rémi Fraisse, a 21-year-old environmental activist, lost his life on the night of October 25-26, 2014, during clashes surrounding the construction site of the Sivens dam in the Tarn region. He was killed by the explosion of an offensive grenade thrown by a gendarme during a law enforcement operation.

After more than ten years of legal battles, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) delivered a ruling on Thursday, February 27, 2025, overturning the initial decision made by the French justice system in this case.

In January 2018, the French judiciary ruled a dismissal of the case, concluding that the gendarme who threw the grenade had not committed a criminal offense, as his actions followed the rules for the use of force under French law. This decision sparked significant controversy and led to several legal appeals, including to the ECHR.

This article delves into the growing role of digital technologies in migration management across Europe, focusing on artificial intelligence (AI), biometrics, and surveillance systems. These tools are increasingly being used to monitor borders, verify identities, and assess asylum applications, promising greater efficiency and security. However, their widespread adoption raises significant ethical and legal concerns. Issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and potential violations of fundamental rights have sparked debates among policymakers, human rights organizations, and civil society.

The study highlights the pressing need for a balanced approach—one that harnesses the benefits of digital innovation while safeguarding migrants' rights and ensuring that technology does not become a means of exclusion or discrimination. Transparency, legal safeguards, and independent oversight mechanisms are essential to prevent misuse and ensure compliance with international human rights standards.

As digital migration policies continue to evolve, this discussion is crucial for shaping fair and humane border control strategies. By fostering a dialogue between governments, tech developers, and human rights advocates, policymakers can ensure that technology serves as a force for protection rather than repression.



## Digital Borders: The Impact of Technology on Migration and Refugee Rights in Europe

### Digital Borders: The Impact of Technology on Migration and Refugee Rights in Europe


This article delves into the growing role of digital technologies in migration management across Europe, focusing on artificial intelligence (AI), biometrics, and surveillance systems. These tools are increasingly being used to monitor borders,...





## Between Regulation and Industry: How Lobbying Shaped EU Emissions Standards

How do industries navigate stringent environmental regulations while maintaining economic stability?

 ASSEDEL

MARCH 25, 2025

In recent decades, the European Union has established increasingly ambitious emissions standards aimed at reducing the environmental impact of the automotive sector. However, the implementation of these regulations has not occurred in isolation—lobbying has played a decisive role in shaping the final policies, ensuring that industrial interests are taken into account alongside environmental objectives.

Our latest policy paper, *Between Regulation and Industry: How Lobbying Shaped EU Emissions Standards*, explores the complex relationship between regulatory ambitions and corporate influence. Through case studies, data analysis, and historical insights, this report examines how automobile manufacturers have strategically engaged with EU policymakers to influence emissions legislation.

### What You Will Learn?

**The Evolution of EU Emissions Standards:** A historical perspective on how regulations have tightened over the years and the key turning points that shaped today's policies.

**The Role of Lobbying in Policy Formation:** An in-depth look at how industry players negotiate regulatory outcomes, including the methods used to advocate for their interests.

**Case Studies of Industry Influence:** Analysis of lobbying efforts by major manufacturers such as Volkswagen and Renault, showcasing how they have influenced emissions policies through regulatory flexibility, incentives, and government subsidies.

READ: 1285

MARCH 26, 2025

Sara Mardini was born in 1995 in a village near Damascus, the first born of three sisters, Yusra two years younger and the little Shahed. Her father, Ezzat, was a competitive swimmer and trained his daughters from a young age, transmitting the passion for this sport to them.

They lived happily and normally until the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, when everything changed.

They were forced to leave their home and suddenly every little daily task they were used to became a terrible danger. In an interview in 2023, Sara expresses the general feeling of this period as an underlying sentiment of not having a place to consider home anymore and the constant sense of peril when going anywhere.

With this feeling, in August 2015, after four years of civil war, Sara and her sister Yusra, took the difficult decision to try to reach Germany, knowing that there was no future in Syria for them.

They left in search of a better future, like more than 800,000 others that year. They decided to embark on a long journey that would take them from Syria to Turkey, then across the open sea to reach the European coast of Greece and finally Germany.



**Sara Mardini "a human, an activist  
and a refugee"**

### **Sara Mardini "a human, an activist, and a refugee"**

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ASSEDEL

READ: 10990





## ReArm Europe: Towards a Safer or More Divided Continent?



### ReArm Europe: Towards a Safer or More Divided Continent?

"We are living in the most momentous and dangerous of times. I do not need to describe the grave nature of the threats that we face."

 ASSEDEL

MARCH 28, 2025

On 4<sup>th</sup> of March the president of the European commission Ursula Von Der Layer used these words to open her speech about the International Security of Europe. Afterwards she added: "*The real question in front of us is whether Europe is prepared to act as decisively as the situation dictates. And whether Europe is ready and able to act with the speed and the ambition that is needed .. We are in an era of rearmament. And Europe is ready to massively boost its defence spending*".

In this way she outlined the new international priority of the *European Union* for the short and long term. Indeed she announced the *ReArm Europe Plan* which could mobilize close to EUR 800 billions for a safer and more resilient Europe.

READ: 2268

MARCH 31, 2025

Ghulam Sughrā Solangi is an inspiring figure whose life and work have become symbols of women's empowerment in Pakistan. With her unyielding determination, advocacy for women's rights, and groundbreaking achievements, Solangi has contributed significantly to changing the narrative around gender equality and women's roles in society.

Born and raised in the rural areas of Sindh, Pakistan, Sughrā Solangi's journey is a testament to overcoming adversity. Growing up in a conservative society where women's roles were traditionally limited to household duties, Solangi's education and career path were not easy. Despite her society's traditions, she was determined to defy others' expectations, and facing numerous barriers, she pursued her education with unwavering resolve. Her commitment to her studies and dreams set her apart from many of her peers.

Solangi's experiences with gender inequality sparked a deep passion to uplift the status of women, particularly in underprivileged communities like hers. She saw firsthand how women were often denied access to education, healthcare, and financial independence—factors that directly contribute to their marginalization.

READ: 1707



## The Power of Activism: Ghulam Sughrā Solangi's Commitment to Women's Rights

Ghulam Sughrā Solangi is an inspiring figure whose life and work have become symbols of women's empowerment in Pakistan.





## Marine Le Pen: Between Judicial Conviction and Political Manipulation, the Rule of Law in Peril

A Misappropriation of Public Funds Estimated at €2.9 Million On Monday, March 31, the verdict was delivered for Marine Le Pen, a leading figure of the National Rally, the French far-right party: a €100,000 fine, a four-year prison sentence—two of...

 ASSEDEL

APRIL 3, 2025

### A Misappropriation of Public Funds Estimated at €2.9 Million

On Monday, March 31, the verdict was delivered for Marine Le Pen, a leading figure of the National Rally, the French far-right party: a €100,000 fine, a four-year prison sentence—two of which to be served under electronic surveillance—and five years of ineligibility. This ruling, crucial in the run-up to the 2027 presidential elections, follows the European parliamentary assistants case, in which the accused were found to have misused public funds by paying parliamentary assistants for tasks that allegedly served the party's interests rather than European legislative work. Eight other National Rally MEPs were also found guilty of embezzling public funds, while twelve parliamentary assistants were convicted of receiving misappropriated public money. According to French judicial authorities, the total damages amount to €2.9 million.

READ: 2015

### What happened ?

In the last few days Italy has been shocked by 2 new cases of femicide. Both victims were 22 year old university students, Sara Campanella and Ilaria Sula, murdered by men unable to accept rejection in love. Firstly on the 30th of March Sara Campanella was stabbed and killed in the street in Messina by a 27 year old man. Then, on the 2th of April, near Rome, the body of Ilaria Sula was found in a suitcase, the 22 year student had been missing since the 25th of March as the family denounced. The killer was the girl's ex-partner who has already confessed the murder to the public institutions.

### The social issue of gender based violence

The recent murders of Sara Campanella and Ilaria Sula are not isolated cases, but part of an ongoing social issue in Italy: gender based violence and femicide. In 2024, a total of 321 homicides have been committed across the country . Of these, 113 were women and 61 of them were killed by current or former partners unable to accept the end of the relationship. In addition, 31 of the total are within the family's environment. These tragic numbers highlight a crisis where love is declined into compulsive possession and a rejection may lead to these dreadful consequences.



### Italy: Two More Femicides Highlight the Lack of Prevention Policies in the Country

In the last few days Italy has been shocked by 2 new cases of femicide. Both victims were 22 year old university students, Sara Campanella and Ilaria Sula, murdered by men unable to accept rejection in love. Firstly on the 30th of March...





## **Ekrem İmamoğlu: the risks of weaponizing jurisdictional and police authorities**

Ekrem İmamoğlu and Türkiye's opposition: justice as a political weapon

 ASSEDEL

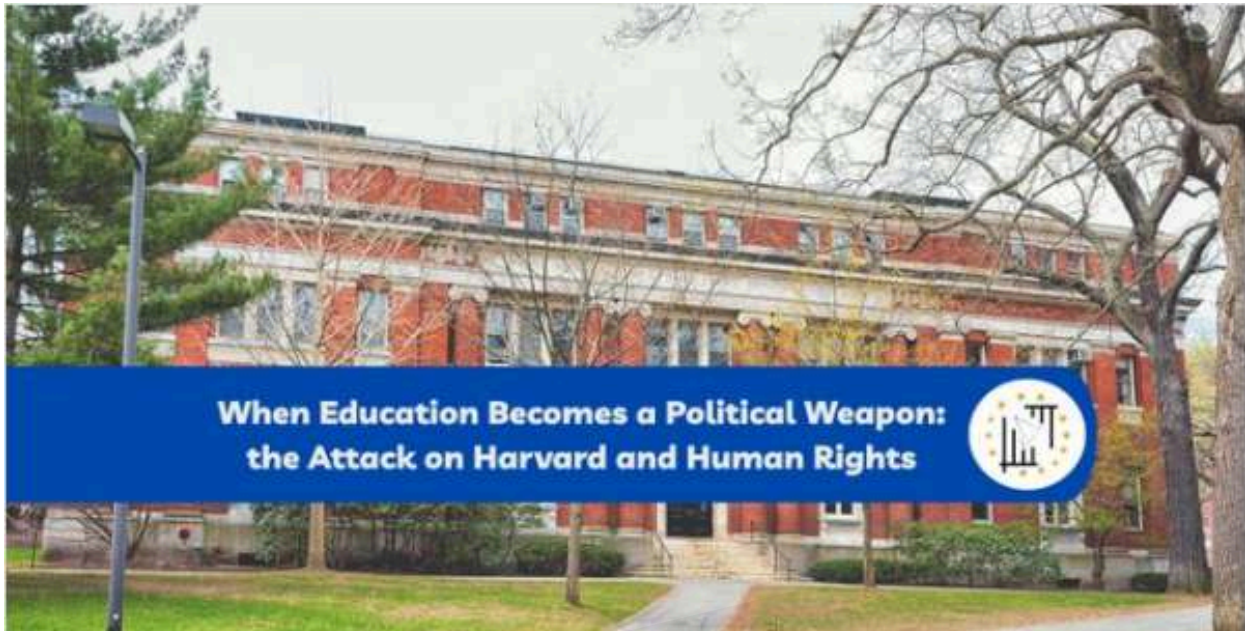
MAY 14, 2025

On 19 March 2025, Ekrem İmamoğlu, Mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and President of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (UMT), was arrested on charges of "corruption" and "aiding terrorism".

On 23 March, Mr İmamoğlu was placed in pre-trial detention on corruption charges, together with 47 other suspects. He was also removed from office, along with the district mayors of Şişli and Beylikdüzü, who were also detained in connection with the same investigation.

Mr İmamoğlu's arrest came just four days before he was nominated as the candidate of Republican People's Party (CHP) for the 2028 presidential election, in a primary in which over 15 million voters participated. In addition, on 18 March, Istanbul University revoked Mr İmamoğlu's university degree, which under the Turkish Constitution, is a prerequisite for running for the country's presidency. (1)

READ: 1116



## When Education Becomes a Political Weapon: the Attack on Harvard and Human Rights



### When Education Becomes a Political Weapon: the Attack on Harvard and Human Rights

In a country historically regarded as a leading nation of education and innovation, the United States (US) is now reshaping the face of education, not by academic values, but by a narrow political agenda. At the end of May, the Trump...

 ASSEDEL

JUNE 18, 2025

In a country historically regarded as a leading nation of education and innovation, the United States (US) is now reshaping the face of education, not by academic values, but by a narrow political agenda. At the end of May, the Trump administration revoked Harvard University's right to admit new and host current international students. For the nearly 30% of current student population at Harvard, this act means they are either forced to transfer or leave the country altogether. A Harvard spokesperson has described the decision as unlawful and reaffirmed the university's stance by stating:

"We are fully committed to sustaining Harvard's ability to welcome our international students and scholars, who come from over 140 countries and who enrich the university – and this nation – interminably."

Harvard University has played a long and influential role in history. Founded in 1636, Harvard predates the founding of the US by over 140 years. The University has had a central part in shaping the American intellectual arena with emphasis on professional education and scientific research. It's known for its influence and extensive alumni background with notable names such as John F. Kennedy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Barack Obama. During this academic year (2024-2025), Harvard has 24,596 enrolled students. Of these, 6,793 are international which means international students are representing 27.2% of the student body.

READ: 965

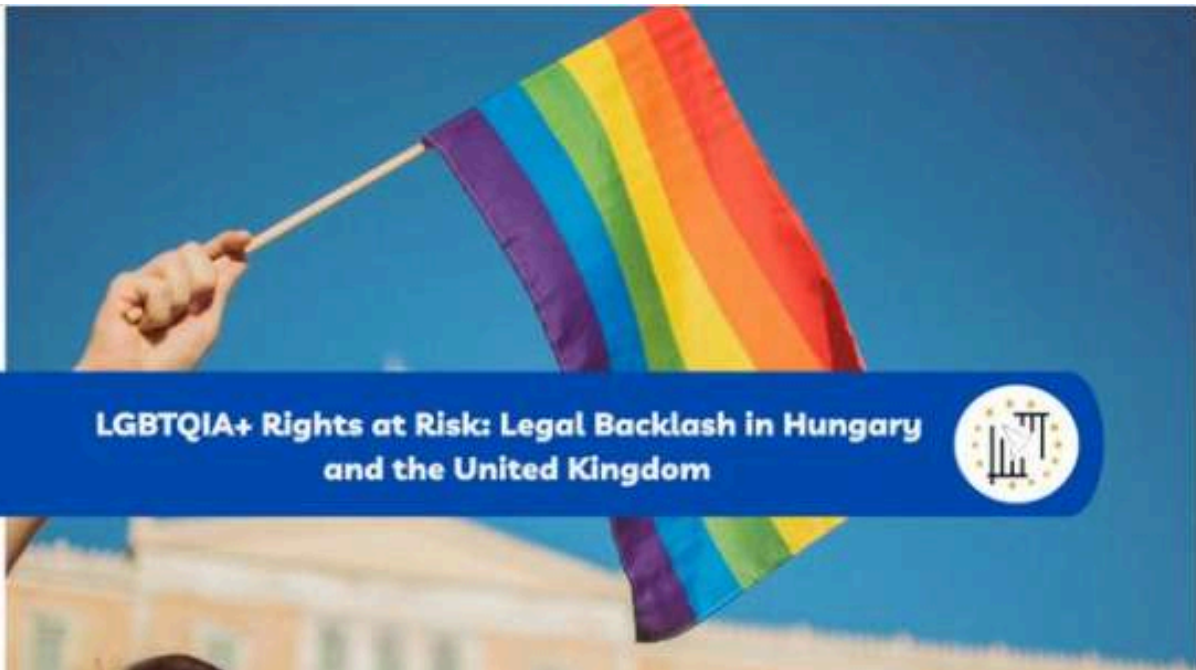


JUNE 26, 2025

In recent months, two countries with distinct legal systems and contrasting historical approaches to LGBTQIA+ rights protection— Hungary and the United Kingdom—have each introduced regressive legal and policy measures that significantly undermine the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly transgender persons.


Although these developments differ in legal structure and political justification, they reveal a shared regression in legal protection, underpinned by a rise in cultural conservatism, far-right political momentum, and the mainstreaming of discriminatory rhetoric, contributing to a dangerous erosion of fundamental rights across Europe.

This report analyzes the legal implications of recent actions in Hungary and The United Kingdom under international human rights law, focusing on violations of freedom of assembly, expression, and non-discrimination, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in articles 11, 10 and 14 respectively, and finally proposes concrete legal recommendations.



## **LGBTQIA+ Rights at Risk: Legal Backlash in Hungary and the United Kingdom**

In recent months, two countries with distinct legal systems and contrasting historical approaches to LGBTQIA+ rights protection— Hungary and the United Kingdom—have each introduced regressive legal and policy measures that significantly...

 ASSEDEL

READ: 1072



03

# INTERVIEWS







### **Interview with Vladimir Prebilič on Türkiye-EU Relations**

At the European Parliament Plenary Session on 7th October, ASSEDEL had the pleasure of speaking to MEP Vladimir Prebilič about Türkiye's troubling political trajectory and EU-Türkiye relations. We discussed Mr Prebilič's experience...

 ASSEDEL

OCTOBER 17, 2025

At the European Parliament Plenary Session on 7th October, ASSEDEL had the pleasure of speaking to MEP Vladimir Prebilič about Türkiye's troubling political trajectory and EU-Türkiye relations. We discussed Mr Prebilič's experience monitoring democratic backsliding in Türkiye in his roles at both the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. He shared his concerns about many topics, such as media freedom, judicial independence, and electoral practices.

Mr Prebilič also stressed the necessity of maintaining ties with Türkiye despite these concerns, in order to continue holding Türkiye's government to account, and to avoid abandoning those in Türkiye who hope for a brighter future. We also discussed the contributions the European Parliament makes to the EU's foreign policy, the challenges of working with different political groups, and the most effective ways MEPs can take action on Türkiye, given the EU's institutional and legal framework.

Mr Prebilič provided valuable insight into the situation in Türkiye broadly and his work specifically, elucidating the functions of the European Parliament and sharing his passion and expertise on the subject. You can watch the full interview [here](#).

READ: 513



We recently had an engaging conversation with Lukas Sieper, a founder of the Party for Progress in Germany, as he marks his 448th day as a Member of the European Parliament. Lukas shared his unique journey in politics, which began out of a shared frustration with traditional political structures and a desire to create a party that truly represents the voices of everyday citizens.

In our interview, he emphasized the party's guiding principle of "ideas instead of ideologies," advocating for a pragmatic approach to policy-making that transcends political divides. Lukas believes that valuable ideas can emerge from all political spectrums, and it's crucial to evaluate them on their own merits.

As one of the youngest MEPs, Lukas is committed to inspiring the next generation of leaders and ensuring that young voices are heard in the political arena. He is particularly passionate about addressing LGBTQ+ rights and calls for stronger actions to hold member states accountable for any violations.

Lukas is actively working to engage youth through initiatives such as an expansive internship program, aimed at integrating young Europeans into the decision-making process within the EU.

This interview sheds light on the important role of young leaders in shaping a progressive and inclusive Europe.

Explore Lukas's insights and vision for a brighter future in European politics.



### **Interview with Lukas Sieper, one of the youngest Members of the European Parliament**

We recently had an engaging conversation with Lukas Sieper, a founder of the Party for Progress in Germany, as he marks his 448th day as a Member of the European Parliament.





### **Interview with Reinhold Lopatka, Member of the European Parliament: Cooperation, Dialogue, and Values in EU Foreign Policy**

In our latest interview, we had the opportunity to speak with Reinhold Lopatka, Member of the European Parliament serving on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Human Rights.

 ASSEDEL /

OCTOBER 24, 2025

In our latest interview, we had the opportunity to speak with Reinhold Lopatka, Member of the European Parliament serving on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Human Rights. The discussion offered valuable insights into the dynamics of parliamentary cooperation, the role of values in EU external action, and the importance of maintaining dialogue even in challenging political contexts.

Lopatka emphasized that the European Parliament is fundamentally a “parliament of compromises,” where collaboration across political groups is essential to achieving meaningful policy outcomes. Despite diverse political perspectives, members regularly find common ground through committees, intergroups, and regional delegations.

Reflecting on the EU’s engagement with regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South America, Lopatka underlined the need for a values-based approach to foreign policy — one that upholds credibility and human rights as core principles. Crucially, the interview also highlighted the vital role of NGOs as partners, particularly in countries where democratic institutions are weak or parliamentarians are not freely elected.

On the issue of democratic backsliding in regions such as the Western Balkans and Turkey, Lopatka firmly rejected the idea of cutting ties, stressing that “dialogue is always the best way.” Maintaining open channels of communication, he noted, is key to promoting democratic values and human rights.



In this interview, Niels Geuking, Member of the European Parliament serving on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), where he is actively engaged in shaping European labour and social policy. His work focuses on strengthening the European labour market, improving cross-border recognition of professional qualifications, and ensuring fair working conditions for all EU citizens.

As a representative of a family-oriented party, Geuking is particularly committed to promoting strong social and family policies at the European level. He advocates for the establishment of European minimum standards — including the European minimum wage — as a way to protect both workers and businesses from unfair competition and wage dumping. Combating child poverty and supporting families are central pillars of his political mission, as he believes that sustainable social systems begin with strong family foundations.

In the face of major challenges such as artificial intelligence and climate change, Geuking sees opportunities for innovation, new employment paths, and skills development. He is a strong believer in lifelong learning, adaptation, and creativity as key tools for Europe's future competitiveness and resilience.

Within the EMPL Committee, he also focuses on mental health in the workplace, youth employment, and regional cohesion, emphasising the importance of supporting rural areas, improving access to decent jobs, and providing young Europeans with fair opportunities through initiatives like Erasmus+. He supports measures to ban unpaid internships, ensuring that all young people — regardless of their background — can gain experience and start their careers on an equal footing.



### **Interview with Niels Geuking, Member of the European Parliament, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)**

In this interview, Niels Geuking, Member of the European Parliament serving on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), where he is actively engaged in shaping European labour and social policy.





### Statement by MEP Carolina Morace on the future of European University Alliances

The discussion focused on her contribution to the report and the next steps needed to address these four challenges

 ASSEDEL //

NOVEMBER 4, 2025

1. reduce socio-economic barriers that limit access to universities,
2. bridge the gap between recent graduates and the labor market,
3. address the structural barriers women face to enter the labor market,
4. and ensure fair, educational, and well-regulated internships across Europe.

#### Beyond academics: putting people at the center

Morace explained that her work on the report aimed to ensure that the initiative does not limit itself to academic excellence, but also integrate social and human dimensions, including equality, diversity and the prevention of all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of gender, sexual identity and disability. She further emphasizes that universities play a central role to promote inclusion and reduce inequalities.

In order to ensure equal access to universities, Morace highlights the need for personalized pathways:

“Accessibility is not only economic — it is also linguistic, cultural, and digital. We must provide tools and personalized pathways to ensure that Europe truly becomes a place where every young person can build their own future, regardless of their starting conditions.”

READ:180



ASSEDEL recently had the pleasure of interviewing Martin Hojsík, Vice-President of the European Parliament and member of the Renew Europe political group.

In our conversation, he shed light on the responsibilities that come with the Vice-Presidency and why this role is crucial to the institution's day-to-day functioning. We also discussed how political affiliation can shape a Vice-President's work and explored meaningful ways for the European Union to deepen its connection with the younger generations of Europe.

### Understanding the role of a Vice-President

Mr. Hojsík explained that serving as Vice-President is an additional responsibility alongside his full-time role as a Member of the European Parliament. His political work is strongly driven by a commitment to tackling the climate crisis and ensuring a livable future for younger generations. As Vice-President, one of his key duties is to oversee and chair plenary sessions. In addition to this, each Vice-President is entrusted with a specific portfolio of responsibilities. Mr. Hojsík's portfolio covers the rule of law, citizens' language rights and multilingualism, relations with Asia and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), work on artificial intelligence, and participation in the Parliament's Internal Audit Panel.



### Interview with Martin Hojsík, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and currently serves as a Vice-President of the European Parliament...

ASSEDEL recently had the pleasure of interviewing Martin Hojsík, Vice-President of the European Parliament and member of the Renew Europe political group. In our conversation, he shed light on the responsibilities that come with the Vice-...





### Interview with Pelin Ayan Musil on Türkiye's Authoritarian Transition

ASSEDEL recently had the opportunity to speak with Pelin Ayan Musil, a researcher, academic, and political scientist at CEVRO Univerzita. Her specialisations include democratic backsliding, regime transitions, political party...

 ASSEDEL /

NOVEMBER 14, 2025

ASSEDEL recently had the opportunity to speak with Pelin Ayan Musil, a researcher, academic, and political scientist at CEVRO Univerzita. Her specialisations include democratic backsliding, regime transitions, political party systems, and contemporary Turkish politics.

From this lens, we discussed Türkiye's political trajectory, focussing on the transition to authoritarianism that has taken place under Erdoğan's two decades in power, as well as the reactions of the European Union and Council of Europe.

#### From Democratisation to Backsliding

She recounted that the first term of Erdoğan's AKP government is usually seen not as a period of backsliding, but conversely, of democratisation in Türkiye.

*'Between 2002 and 2007, the first term of the government, we actually see that the country has really democratised to an extent that had not been witnessed in the past. By that time the major threat to Turkish democracy was seen as the military.'*

In addition, Erdoğan's government fostered better relations with European partners, dedicated unambiguously to EU accession.



As the student housing situation across France continues to grow increasingly challenging, understanding the perspectives of those at the forefront of student advocacy is essential. In preparation for ASSEDEL's upcoming Housing Crisis Event at the European Parliament on 17 December, we had the privilege of speaking with **Caroline Knab**, President of AFGES Strasbourg, elected to the CNESER for FAGE and a member of the Board of Administration of the University of Strasbourg. Her insights illuminate the structural challenges students face today and the urgent reforms necessary to ensure equitable access to housing.

## Understanding AFGES: A Federation with a Mission

AFGES is a federation of student associations that unites organisations across various academic fields in Strasbourg. Its mission is twofold:

1. **Supporting student associations** in their initiatives and daily operations.
2. **Representing students** within university councils and institutional bodies, ensuring that their rights and needs are defended at every level.

According to Knab, *"Our primary role is to support associations and to represent students within the university's decision-making structures."*

Through these dual functions, AFGES serves as a vital link between student communities and institutional decision-makers, advocating for fair policies and sustainable solutions.



### **Student Housing Crisis: A Conversation with Caroline Knab, President of AFGES Strasbourg**

As the student housing situation across France continues to grow increasingly challenging, understanding the perspectives of those at the forefront of student advocacy is essential. In preparation for ASSEDEL's upcoming Housing Crisis...





### **Interview with Hannes Heide, MEP: Strengthening Culture, Creativity, and Education in Europe**

We had the pleasure of meeting with Hannes Heide, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and member of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). During the conversation, Mr.

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**NOVEMBER 27, 2025**

We had the pleasure of meeting with Hannes Heide, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and member of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). During the conversation, Mr. Heide shared his perspectives on the committee's priorities, the importance of cultural and educational programs such as Erasmus+, and the evolving challenges facing Europe's creative and academic sectors.

#### **Key Priorities of the CULT Committee**

Mr. Heide emphasized that the European Union is currently facing both external and internal challenges, making it crucial for the CULT Committee to strengthen its efforts in promoting education, culture, and civic engagement. One of the committee's main priorities is the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which defines the EU's long-term budget. From the CULT perspective, the MFF directly affects how citizens particularly young Europeans connect with the European Union through initiatives such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe. "Erasmus+ is a flagship program connecting young people with the European Union. We must ensure that more young Europeans are able to participate in the coming years," said Mr. Heide.

He also underlined the significance of supporting citizen engagement and the creative industries, which continue to grow despite economic challenges. For example, Europe's music industry expanded by 9% last year, a sign of the sector's resilience and cultural impact.

ASSEDEL had the honor to speak with Irish MEP Michael McNamara, member of the Renew Europe group and the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). We explored the pressing challenges Europe faces today, from safeguarding civil liberties to navigating global geopolitical tensions.

### **The Broad Mandate of LIBE**

LIBE's work spans a wide array of justice-related issues, and Mr. McNamara underscores that pinpointing a single priority is difficult. Individual MEPs often gravitate toward different areas. For many in the committee, rule of law is an important focus, while others focus on migration policy, and so on. McNamara himself focuses on digital rights and data privacy. He explains that simplification is a major thrust of the Parliament in this mandate, and stresses that as this moves forward, it will be crucial to ensure that fundamental freedoms remain fully protected and are not weakened in the process.

### **Media contraction and AI: a threat to democracy**

McNamara considers the shrinking of independent media to be one of the most serious threats to civil liberties and rule of law in Europe. He believes that the rise of AI-powered search engines, which deliver single-answer responses rather than diverse sources, is disrupting the ability of journalists to monetize their work. With fewer platforms sustaining investigative journalism, the public may become less informed about human rights abuses, which is a troubling trend for democratic accountability.



### **Interview with Michael McNamara, Irish MEP: Challenges and Realities in Europe's Democratic Landscape**

ASSEDEL had the honor to speak with Irish MEP Michael McNamara, member of the Renew Europe group and the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE).





# 04 EVENTS



FEBRUARY 14, 2025

This event emphasized major challenges of this topic but also shed light on possible actions and solutions to better prevent and combat hate speech and hate crime in our society.

We organized this event in collaboration with Evin Incir and her political group, the Socialists and Democrats. It took place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg and brought together key figures of the field:

Evin Incir, Member of the European Parliament, outlined the growing influence of far-right forces in the European Parliament, making it increasingly difficult to implement effective measures against hate speech and hate crime in the European Union. She also stressed the urgent need to counter disinformation and online hate speech by holding digital platforms accountable and further implementing the *Digital Services Act*. According to Ms. Incir, the EU must ensure that the same rules apply offline as online in order to protect fundamental rights and minority groups in Europe.



### **Panel Discussion: Hate Speech and Hate Crime Targeting Religious and Ethnic Communities**

ASSEDEL is glad to share that our panel discussion this Monday, February 10th, addressing the pressing issue of hate crime and hate speech targeting religious and ethnic communities was a great success!

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READ: 1719





## ASSEDEL's High School Debate Competition at the European Parliament

On Tuesday, March 4, 2025, ASSEDEL had the honor of hosting its first-ever inter-high school debate competition at the European Parliament, centered on the theme of social justice.



**MARCH 7, 2025**

Students from Fustel de Coulanges and Jean Rostand high schools went head-to-head in a battle of eloquence, tackling key social justice issues across three main areas:

1. Education and access to resources
2. Civic participation and youth engagement
3. Inclusion of minorities and the fight against discrimination

After 15 minutes of preparation, teams engaged in six-minute debates, arguing either for or against the following motions:

Topic 1 – Education and access to resources:

- Should the European Union encourage its member states to provide free education up to university level?
- Should France introduce an unconditional student income equivalent to the minimum wage (SMIC) for young people aged 18 to 21?

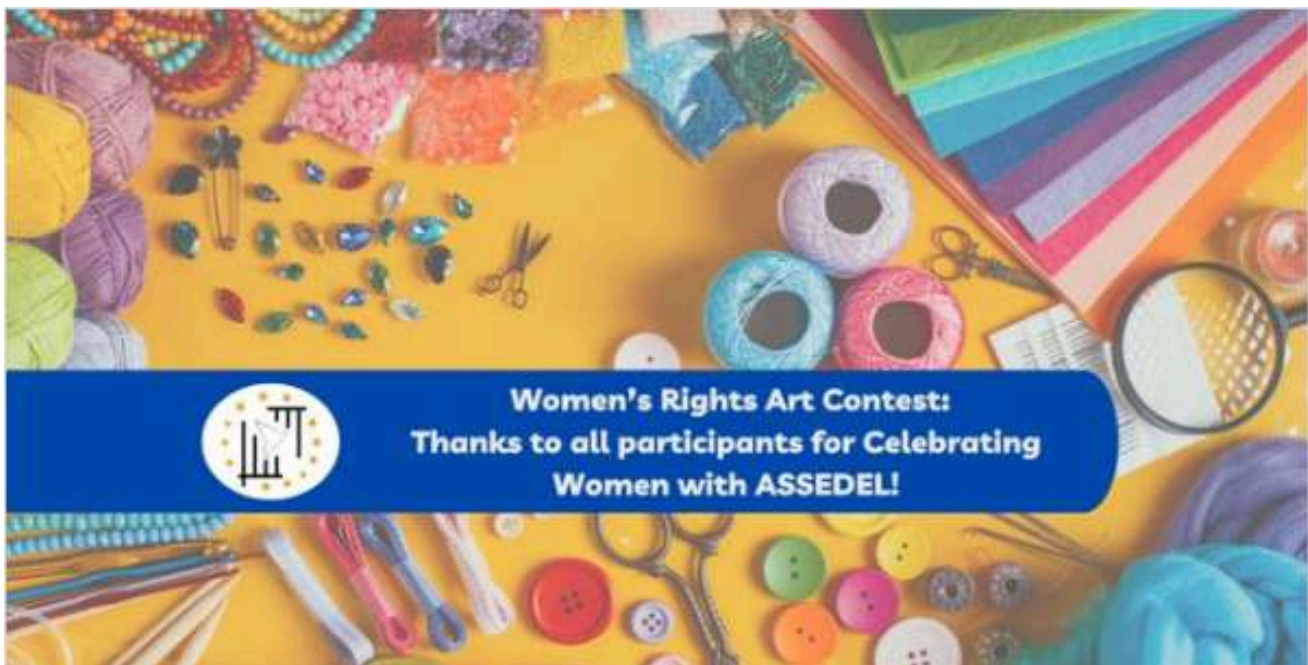
APRIL 11, 2025

On the occasion of International Women's Day, ASSEDEL launched an art contest to celebrate the female universe in all its forms, colors, and nuances. We invited artists from across Europe to share their vision through photography, painting, sculpture, drawing, installation, or any other form of artistic expression—each accompanied by a brief explanation of how it reflects the beauty, strength, and significance of women in our society.

Art has the power to tell stories, evoke emotions, and inspire change. Through this contest, we received an incredible variety of submissions that conveyed powerful messages of empowerment, resilience, and hope. Every piece was a testament to determination, creativity, and social commitment—many paying tribute to the women who shape our lives, others offering a vision of freedom and equality.

We were truly impressed by the originality, depth, and emotional impact of each artwork. Your contributions turned this initiative into a moment of collective reflection and celebration, helping us shine a light on women's rights and gender equality.

To honor your commitment and talent, we have published photos of all the submitted artworks on our website. You can find them at the bottom of this post.



## Women's Rights Art Contest

"Every woman is a work of art, a unique creation that embodies strength, passion, and beauty."

 ASSEDEL





## **PACE April 2025 Session: The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe (CoE) is the oldest European body , formed in the wake of WWII in 1949 and today counts 46 members. Despite the confusional name due to the correlation with EU institutions, the Council of Europe is a completely...

 ASSEDEL

**APRIL 15, 2025**

### **Introduction: What is the Council of Europe?**

The Council of Europe (CoE) is the oldest European body , formed in the wake of WWII in 1949 and today counts 46 members. Despite the confusional name due to the correlation with EU institutions, the Council of Europe is a completely independent body, nothing related with the EU. Indeed European countries inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human rights published by the United Nation (UN) in 1948, wanted a legally enforceable version of its own capable of being backed by Rule of Law. This will led Europe to sign the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and to found International Organisations such as Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), able to rule over the national courts, in order to enforce the Convention.

### **The PACE: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

In the last week from 6th to 11th of April the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) has taken place. It represents one of 6 key groups of the institution; In addition to: Secretary General, Commissioner for Human Rights, Committee of Ministers, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and Conference of International NGOs.

**MAY 5, 2025**

**Strasbourg, France** – On behalf of ASSEDEL, the European Association for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms, lawyer **Hakan Kaplankaya** delivered a compelling lecture at **Sciences Po Strasbourg**, dissecting one of the European Court of Human Rights' most significant rulings in recent years: *Yüksel Yalçınkaya v. Turkey*. The presentation offered a deep dive into the legal, political, and human rights dimensions of the case, illustrating the systemic erosion of due process in post-coup Turkey.

#### **Turkey's Post-Coup Crackdown and Mass Injustice**

Kaplankaya opened by framing the case within the broader context of Turkey's response to the **failed coup attempt in 2016**, which led to an extended **state of emergency**. As a result, the government initiated a sweeping purge:

- Over **130,000 civil servants**, including more than **4,000 judges**, were dismissed.
- **Media outlets, universities, schools, and NGOs** were shut down.
- Properties were confiscated, with estimated losses exceeding **\$32 billion**.
- More than **705,000 individuals** were investigated for alleged ties to the **Gülen movement**, now designated by the state as a terrorist organization.



**Lecture on the Implementation of the  
Judgments of the ECtHR at Sciences Po  
Strasbourg**

#### **Lecture on the Implementation of the Judgments of the ECtHR at Sciences Po Strasbourg**

**Strasbourg, France** – On behalf of ASSEDEL, the European Association for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms, lawyer Hakan Kaplankaya delivered a compelling lecture at Sciences Po Strasbourg, dissecting one of the European Court of Huma...





## ASSEDEL hosts an Insightful Panel Discussion: "Water security and Human Rights: a joint challenge affecting all"

ASSEDEL is pleased to share that our panel discussion "Water Security and Human Rights: A Joint Challenge Affecting All" held on Wednesday, May 7th, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg was a great success.



**MAY 12, 2025**

ASSEDEL is pleased to share that our panel discussion "**Water Security and Human Rights: A Joint Challenge Affecting All**" held on Wednesday, May 7th, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg was a great success. It was the first of the event series on Climate Justice that we are willing to organize this year, aimed to examine how climate change affects human rights in Europe, by framing environmental issues as a shared challenge.

Our panel discussion, co-hosted by MEP Kai Tegethoff, representative of Volt Europe within the Greens and European Free Alliance, not only highlighted the significant challenges surrounding this topic but also explored concrete actions and possible solutions to address these issues and involve and bring awareness to civil society.

We had the honour to bring together leading figures in the field:

**Kai Tegethoff** is a German Member of the European Parliament, representative of Volt Europe within the Greens/EFA group. With a background in civil engineering and previous experience as a lecturer and researcher in Hydraulic Engineering and Water Management, he brought a valuable technical and political perspective to the discussion. During his intervention, he emphasized the need for a more sustainable and nature-based approach to water management in the EU, stressing the importance of investing in resilient infrastructure and raising public awareness. As climate change leads to more erratic weather patterns—causing droughts in some areas and floods in others—vulnerable communities are hit hardest, often lacking insurance and resources to cope with increasing damages. MEP Tegethoff underlined how water insecurity is not only an environmental issue, but also a social and political one, potentially fuelling instability. He called for a renewed focus on restoring natural ecosystems and rethinking how we manage water flows, arguing that nature should be seen as a partner rather than an obstacle. Finally, he stressed the necessity for the European Parliament to strengthen efforts to engage citizens and civil society in shaping future water policies, and to ground these actions in solidarity and shared responsibility.



JUNE 13, 2025



assedelorg Celebrating Europe Through Art! ✨

We are incredibly grateful for the amazing response to our Europe Day Art Contest! 📷💙 Each photo offered a unique and inspiring perspective on the values of unity, peace, diversity, and shared identity that define Europe.

A heartfelt thank you to all the participants who used their creativity to celebrate Europe and its ideals. Your vision and storytelling bring us closer together! 🌍💛

🎉 Congratulations to our winners! 🎉

READ: 2235





## EUROPEAN IDENTITY – Art Contest Europe Day – May 9, 2025

We are pleased to announce that the Art Contest Europe Day, launched in celebration of Europe Day 2025, has officially come to a close.



**JUNE 16, 2025**

Organized by ASSEDEL – The European Association for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms, the contest invited individuals from across Europe to express their vision of a united and diverse continent through **drawings, photographs, and videos**. The response was inspiring — we received a wide range of heartfelt, original, and thought-provoking submissions.

We extend our **sincere thanks to all participants** who took part in this initiative. Your creativity and passion helped bring to life the core values that define the European project: **democracy, peace, human rights, and unity through diversity**.

In an era marked by social polarization, democratic challenges, and growing intolerance, this contest aimed to reaffirm our shared commitment to human dignity and inclusion. It was a space to remind ourselves — and each other — that **Europe is not just a place, but a purpose**: a collective mission rooted in respect, equality, and freedom.

Each submission served as a powerful reminder that our **differences do not divide us** — they strengthen us.

Through your work, you helped us draw, photograph, and film **the soul of Europe**.

Thank you for standing with us, and for making visible what truly unites us.

**JULY 11, 2025**

We are thrilled to share that our Panel Discussion “No One Left Hungry: Food Access as a Fundamental Human Right” took place on Tuesday, July 8th at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, kindly co-hosted by MEP Cristina Guarda (Greens/EFA). The event aimed to analyze current food insecurity trends from a human rights lens and explore actionable solutions with our panel of leading experts.

Following the successful launch event “Water Security and Human Rights: A Joint Challenge Affecting All” in May, this was the second of the Climate Justice Series organized by ASSEDEL in 2025, where we explore the intersections between climate change and human rights in contemporary societies. We believe that framing climate justice as a shared responsibility is crucial: environmental challenges transcend borders and demand collective awareness, accountability, and a commitment to the core principle of the 2030 Agenda – no one should be left behind.

We were honoured to host some leading experts in the field.



### **Panel Discussion “No One Left Hungry: Food Access as a Fundamental Human Right”**

We are thrilled to share that our Panel Discussion “No One Left Hungry: Food Access as a Fundamental Human Right” took place on Tuesday, July 8th at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, kindly co-hosted by MEP Cristina Guarda...

 ASSEDEL

**READ: 1686**





## 17 December 2025: Europe's Housing Crisis in the European Parliament

Across the European Union, access to affordable housing has become one of the most pressing social challenges of the past decade. Rising living costs, demographic pressures and limitations in housing supply are contributing to a...

 ASSEDEL /

### NOVEMBER 26, 2025

Across the European Union, access to affordable housing has become one of the most pressing social challenges of the past decade. Rising living costs, demographic pressures and limitations in housing supply are contributing to a situation where an increasing number of people struggle to secure a stable home. This article offers an introduction to the housing crisis in Europe and its links to human rights. ASSEDEL considers the growing challenges in access to adequate housing to be a matter of serious concern, consistent with our mission to advance human rights and social justice. In response, we are organising a focused discussion in the European Parliament this December.

#### What do we mean by a "housing crisis"?

Across the European Union, the term "housing crisis" describes a combination of structural pressures affecting both the availability of housing and its affordability. For instance, over the last 15 years average house prices in the EU increased by approximately 57.9%, while rents rose by around 27.8% (Eurostat, 2025). In 2023, about 16% of the EU-27 population lived in overcrowded households lacking sufficient rooms for the number of persons (European Commission, 2025). Growing urbanisation, mobility for work or study, ageing populations, and changing household sizes all place new demands on housing markets.



### **Panel Discussion: "The Housing Crisis: Social Impact and Policy Implications"**

We are proud to share that ASSEDEL's Panel Discussion, "The Housing Crisis: Social Impact and Policy Implications", took place on Wednesday, December 17th at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, co-hosted by MEP Ciaran Mullooly (Renew Europe).



**DECEMBER 19, 2025**

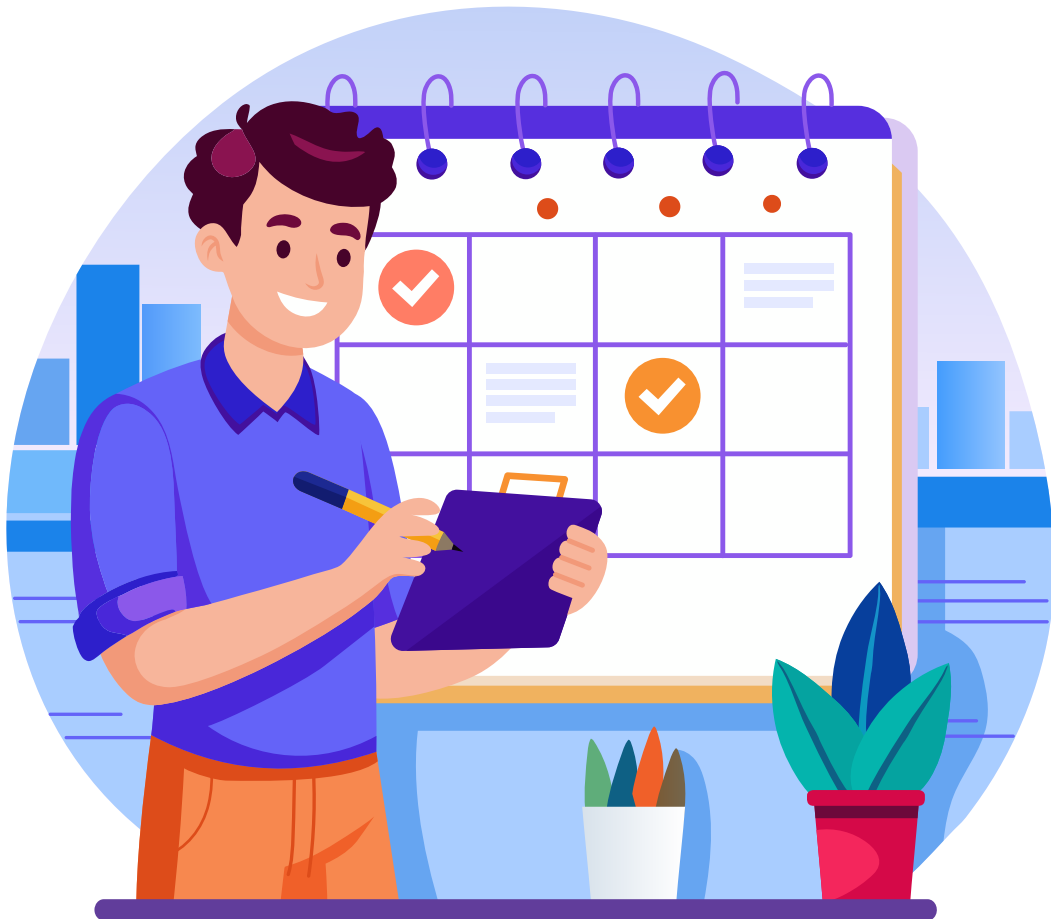
We are proud to share that ASSEDEL's Panel Discussion, "The Housing Crisis: Social Impact and Policy Implications", took place on Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, co-hosted by MEP Ciaran Mullooly (Renew Europe), Vice-chair of the HOUS Committee at the European Parliament. The event aimed to analyze the current challenges and possible solutions to the housing crisis in Europe through a social and human-rights oriented perspective, bringing together policymakers, institutional representatives, civil society actors, and financial institutions. The panel discussion addressed housing not merely as a market issue, but as a fundamental social and human rights challenge, with particular emphasis on young people, vulnerable groups, and the long-term sustainability of housing systems across Europe. In particular, the speakers highlighted the structural nature of the crisis, characterised by insufficient supply, rising costs, fragmented national policies, and weak implementation of existing legal frameworks at Member State level.

**READ: 90**





# 05 PROJECTS









06

# TRAINING SESSIONS



**FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

On February 11, 2025, ASSEDEL had the honour of hosting an insightful and impactful training session on the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The session was led by Geneviève Mayer, former Head of the Department for the Execution of Judgments at the ECHR, and provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms ensuring the enforcement of ECHR rulings.

With the European Convention on Human Rights celebrating its 75th anniversary, this discussion was especially relevant in addressing the ongoing challenges in ensuring compliance with human rights obligations across Europe.

### **Understanding the Execution of ECHR Judgments**

#### **Why is effective execution so important?**

The European Court of Human Rights plays a crucial role in safeguarding human rights across the 46 member states of the Council of Europe. However, its judgments alone do not guarantee justice—effective execution is essential to ensure that rulings are not only declared but also implemented. The Committee of Ministers supervises this process, ensuring that member states fulfill their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.



### **ASSEDEL hosted Geneviève Mayer for a discussion on the implementation of ECHR judgments**

On February 11, 2025, ASSEDEL had the honour of hosting an insightful and impactful training session on the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).





## ASSEDEL hosted a training session with Petra Bayr and explored the PACE Structure and Collaboration Opportunities

On February 13th, ASSEDEL had the pleasure of hosting a training session with Petra Bayr, a member of the Austrian Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). She is affiliated with the Socialist, Democrats, a...



**FEBRUARY 21, 2025**

On February 13th, ASSEDEL had the pleasure of hosting a training session with Petra Bayr, a member of the Austrian Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). She is affiliated with the Socialist, Democrats, and Greens political group, where she also serves as the Head of the Women's Group Presidents. Additionally, she is one of the chairpersons of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights.

During her presentation, she provided an insightful overview of PACE, including its composition, key committees, and procedural mechanisms. She explained the 6 committees that work on content as well as the monitoring committees. She also offered a firsthand explanation of how members of parliament join political groups within PACE, detailing the process by her group's statute with examples of previous encounters. The insight was interesting and educational.

In the Q&A session, our team explored how a report is prepared by a member of parliament and identified potential opportunities for collaboration with PACE members on future reports. This guidance will be highly valuable for our association in further expanding our network and strengthening our advocacy efforts. Furthermore, another question raised during the session inquired about the extent of cooperation between PACE and the European Parliament. The response was somewhat surprising, revealing that the level of cooperation between the two institutions is rather limited.

**MARCH 6, 2025**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March ASSEDEL had the pleasure to be invited to the Council of Europe by the Commission of Human Rights for a training session. The meeting addressed themes such as how the commission works within and how this body interacts with other institutions like the ECtHR and the submission of executions of judgements of ECtHR.

The Commission of Human Rights was founded in 1999. This body has to act in an independent and partial way and it has no jurisdictional power. The commissioner is elected for a 6 year term by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) from a list of three candidates prepared by the committee of ministers. In addition, It is not allowed to run for a second term in order to preserve the partiality of the organism. The current Commissioner is Michael O' Flaherty who has taken the office since April 2024.

The main goal of the Commission is to increase awareness about Human Rights, promoting education and ensuring their prevention. Since the start of his term Michael O' Flaherty has stated the list of priorities of the commission which are: war in Ukraine, AI, Environment, Social Rights and Migration. Moreover, the commissioner has also highlighted the importance to protect social groups like Forgotten People and Human Rights Defenders



### **ASSEDEL's Training Session at the Council of Europe**

On the 5th of March ASSEDEL had the pleasure to be invited to the Council of Europe by the Commission of Human Rights for a training session.

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## Training Session with the member of the French National Assembly Emmanuel Fernandes

As part of a training session organized by ASSEDEL, Emmanuel Fernandes, a Member of Parliament (MP) for La France Insoumise (LFI), engaged in an open discussion about his political journey, parliamentary responsibilities, and pressing...



**MARCH 21, 2025**

As part of a training session organized by ASSEDEL, Emmanuel Fernandes, a Member of Parliament (MP) for La France Insoumise (LFI), engaged in an open discussion about his political journey, parliamentary responsibilities, and pressing national and international issues. The session provided valuable insights into his stance on defense policies, social justice, environmental concerns, and the growing influence of the far-right. Throughout the discussion, he answered a series of direct questions posed by the audience, shedding light on his views on re-arming Europe, military spending, nuclear energy, and the future challenges facing the European Union.

### **A Citizen That Happened to Become a Member of Parliament**

Emmanuel Fernandes was first elected in June 2022 to represent the Esplanade constituency in Strasbourg and was re-elected in 2024 following the dissolution of the National Assembly by President Emmanuel Macron. His political path was far from traditional, as he described himself as “a citizen that happened to become a Member of Parliament.” Unlike many career politicians, he did not envision himself in office but was drawn into public service after years of activism.

Before entering politics, Fernandes spent nearly 20 years in the industrial sector, working in a cement manufacturing company specializing in gearbox production for plants. His political engagement began in 2012 with Le Parti de Gauche, founded by Jean-Luc Mélenchon. After traveling and broadening his perspective, he returned to France and became deeply involved in La France Insoumise, eventually being selected as a candidate through the movement’s grassroots democratic process. In Strasbourg, twelve action groups operate within the party structure, five of which cover his constituency. It was through these local groups that he was chosen to represent his movement in the 2022 elections.



APRIL 1, 2025

On March 31st, ASSEDEL interns had the opportunity to attend a training session led by Gaia Pellegrini, an Accredited Parliamentary Assistant (APA). Drawing from her own experience, Gaia provided valuable insights into the EU legislative process, the role of APAs, and career opportunities within the so-called "EU Bubble."

She began by explaining the concept of the "EU Bubble," referring to the concentration of institutions, organizations, and professionals in Brussels that drive EU policies and decision-making. Within this environment, APAs play a crucial role in supporting Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in different capacities. Their work generally falls into three main areas: legislative tasks, which include conducting research, drafting reports, and proposing amendments; administrative and event management, involving schedule coordination, event organization, and logistics; and communication, which covers media relations, social media management, and content creation.

Gaia highlighted the dynamic nature of the job, where no two days are ever the same. One of the biggest challenges is handling the workload; she added that success in this role requires flexibility, patience, and adaptability.

For those aspiring to a career within the EU institutions, Gaia shared valuable advice. She emphasized the importance of networking and maintaining a professional presence on social media, both of which played a crucial role in her own career path. She also introduced several key EU-related career opportunities, including the **VIE (Volontariat International en Entreprise)**, an excellent opportunity for international experience; the **Schuman Traineeship**, a politically oriented internship within the European Parliament; and the **Blue Book Traineeship**, a more technical internship with the European Commission, open to candidates from various backgrounds.



### Understanding the Role of an Accredited Parliamentary Assistant (APA)

On March 31st, ASSEDEL interns had the opportunity to attend a training session led by Gaia Pellegrini, an Accredited Parliamentary Assistant (APA).





## Inside EU Politics: Challenges, Representation, and Human Rights

On April 1st, ASSEDEL hosted a training session with Catarina Vieira, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the Greens/EFA group. At 28, she is one of the youngest MEPs and describes herself as a European at heart—born in the...

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**APRIL 4, 2025**

On April 1st, ASSEDEL hosted a training session with Catarina Vieira, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from the Greens/EFA group. At 28, she is one of the youngest MEPs and describes herself as a European at heart—born in the Azores, Portugal, she studied in the Czech Republic before moving to the Netherlands in 2017, where she was later elected to the European Parliament. Her international background and experience bring a unique perspective to her work in EU politics.

The session was structured as a Q&A, allowing for an open discussion in which Catarina answered questions on her political trajectory, the functioning of the European Parliament, and the challenges of policymaking at the EU level.

She provided insights into the role of the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), which operates under the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and focuses on human rights issues outside the EU. She also discussed the process by which committee memberships are determined at the beginning of each legislative term.

Reflecting on her path into politics, Catarina outlined the steps to joining a political party and the challenges of running a campaign. She also spoke about her early political engagement through youth activism and how her professional background contributed to her understanding of EU institutions.

A significant part of the discussion focused on the internal dynamics of the Greens/EFA group, which brings together MEPs from various national parties. She explained how internal debates play a crucial role in shaping a cohesive political stance and highlighted the function of shadow rapporteurs in developing legislative amendments.

APRIL 24, 2025

On April 23rd, ASSEDEL hosted a thought-provoking training session titled “**The Role of Automation in International Human Rights: An Analysis of Fikfak & Helfer.**” The session, which explored the increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into international judicial systems—particularly the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)—was also livestreamed and is now available for replay on ASSEDEL’s YouTube channel.

The session built upon the critical work of scholars **Fikfak and Helfer**, who examine the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in the realm of human rights adjudication.

#### **A Court Under Pressure: The Current Landscape**

The ECHR is currently facing an unprecedented influx of applications, a situation worsened by the withdrawal of Russian judges following Russia’s exit from the European Convention on Human Rights in 2022. With Russian cases now redirected to Geneva and staff shortages growing, the conversation around automation and AI has become increasingly urgent.



#### **Training Session with Professor Veronika Fikfak on The Role of Automation in International Human Rights**

On April 23rd, ASSEDEL hosted a thought-provoking training session titled “The Role of Automation in International Human Rights: An Analysis of Fikfak & Helfer.” The session, which explored the increasing integration of Artificial...

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READ: 15840





## Training Session Summary: The Work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

On 22 May, ASSEDEL had the pleasure of being hosted at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg for a special training session focused on the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, one of the six key institutions of the Council of Europe.

 ASSEDEL

**MAY 23, 2025**

The session began by revisiting the historical roots of the Congress. In the aftermath of World War II, during Europe's democratic reconstruction, the then French Prime Minister emphasized the importance of giving local authorities a voice in shaping the future. He warned that excessive centralization of power could lead to authoritarianism and stressed the need for local governments to be included in key decisions, particularly in the allocation of financial and public resources.

This thinking led to the emergence of the "movement of mayors" (mouvement des maires), guided by Jacques Chaban-Delmas, which was aimed at decentralization as a pillar of democratic resilience. As a result, in 1954, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) established the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, which later evolved into the current Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in 1994.

The Congress is structured as a bicameral assembly, comprising:

- The Chamber of Local Authorities, representing mayors and municipal councillors, which focuses on local governance, urban development, and public services.
- The Chamber of Regions, consisting of elected officials from regional entities, which addresses broader territorial governance, regional development, and interregional cooperation

Both chambers represent the 46 member states of the Council of Europe and work together in plenary sessions to adopt recommendations, resolutions, and reports that influence democratic practices at the local and regional levels.

**MAY 28, 2025**

On the 28th of May, ASSEDEL has the pleasure to host in our office Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, former judge of Armenia at European court of human rights and former UN representative of High Commissioner for Human Rights, for a special training session about his highly experienced career path in Human Rights Diplomacy through the UN and Council of Europe system.

Human rights diplomacy system is based on two main pillars: Respect and Promotion. However if we add International relations to the discussion , geopolitics play a pivotal role in defining the proper strategy to spread human rights awareness. Therefore, the Human rights diplomacy system, due to its connection to the geopolitical balance, emerges more as a living instrument rather than a static one.

#### **UN Human rights diplomacy system**

Indeed, when it comes to the UN, it is crucial not to forget that the UN has been established on 3 main tasks. The institutions must function accordingly to these tasks, no matter if they are facing a regional or global system. If not they lose their values.

- peace and security
- development
- human rights



#### **Training Session on Human Rights Diplomacy with Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, Former Judge at the European Court of Human Rights**

On the 28th of May, ASSEDEL has the pleasure to host in our office Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, former judge of Armenia at European court of human rights and former UN representative of High Commissioner for Human Rights, for a special training...

 **ASSEDEL**

**READ: 1402**



# TRAINING SESSION ON THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

With Marie-Claude Hofner



## Training session on the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and its...

ASSEDEL was delighted to welcome Marie Claude Hofner, a medical doctor by profession, who is the first woman doctor to sit on the Istanbul Convention's monitoring group in the Council of Europe – the Group of Experts on Action against...

 ASSEDEL /

**OCTOBER 13, 2025**

ASSEDEL was delighted to welcome Marie Claude Hofner, a medical doctor by profession, who is the first woman doctor to sit on the Istanbul Convention's monitoring group in the Council of Europe – the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). The training session addressed the significant issue of violence against women, which is exacerbated by a patriarchal societal structure. Violence against women is a multifaceted issue that can be compared to an iceberg, with the visible part representing the most violent and extreme cases of femicide and physical harm. However, it also encompasses softer forms of violence, such as sexist jokes.

The GREVIO member suggested that violence against women should be regarded not only as a legal and political concern, but as a public issue of wide significance. In order to treat something as a public issue it has to meet the following requirements: 1) it must be frequent; 2) it must have serious consequences for health; it must have a negative impact on the community; and 4) it must be preventable. A closer look at violence against women reveals that it is a matter of public concern:

The frequency of violence against women is very high: 30.7% of women in the EU experience physical, sexual violence or threats over their lifetime. That means almost one of every three women will live in a situation of violence.

The consequences of violence against women on health are grave. The impact on both physical and mental health is significant. For instance, women who have been subjected to violence or are living in a violent environment are more likely to suffer from depression, suicide and addiction. They also face an increased risk of developing chronic diseases, particularly cardiovascular disease.

Recently, we had the opportunity to participate in a training session with Polish Judge Monika Gasiorska, who offered deep insights into the challenges and evolving standards surrounding family law and child welfare in Europe. This discussion provided a valuable framework for analyzing the landmark case of *L.D. v. Poland*, which sheds light on the obligations of national courts under both European Union law and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The case underscores the importance of timely and effective enforcement of custody and contact orders, revealing how procedural delays can profoundly affect family relationships and the rights of both parents and children. This article examines the case details, the relevant legal principles, and the broader implications for human rights advocacy across Europe — including the ongoing efforts of ASSEDEL to strengthen the rule of law and child protection standards.

#### Background of the Case

*L.D.*, a Polish mother, initially held full parental custody of her son, *B.*, born in 2006. However, in March 2011, after a routine visit, the father, *P.*, refused to return the child. Over the years that followed, *L.D.* sought help from both police and courts to enforce her custody and contact rights. Despite multiple court rulings in her favor, enforcement remained inefficient and delayed.

Between 2011 and 2019, numerous proceedings took place, yet *B.* continued to live primarily with his father. Expert reports indicated that *P.* had manipulated the child and deliberately obstructed contact with the mother.



#### Training Session on Family Law and Child Welfare: The Case of *L.D. v. Poland* – A Critical Examination of Family Law and Child Rights in...

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## Training Session on Protecting Unaccompanied Minor Migrants with Ad-Hoc Judge of the ECtHR Marcin Górski

ASSEDEL had the honour of hosting an in-depth training session led by Marcin Górski, Polish judge and expert in EU and human rights law.

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**NOVEMBER 25, 2025**

ASSEDEL had the honour of hosting an in-depth training session led by **Marcin Górski**, Polish judge and expert in EU and human rights law. The session explored the evolving legal landscape surrounding **unaccompanied minor migrants (UAMs)** and provided valuable insights into the interaction between EU law, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and national legal systems.

Unaccompanied minors remain among the most vulnerable individuals arriving in Europe. Their protection requires the coordinated application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, EU primary and secondary legislation, and the ECHR as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

### EU Legal Foundations: Protecting the Most Vulnerable

The European Union is built on core values enshrined in **Article 2 TEU**, including human dignity, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. These fundamental values guide Member States in ensuring the protection of migrant children.

Under **Article 6 TEU**, the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** holds the same legal value as the Treaties. Its provisions reflect rights already rooted in the ECHR and in common constitutional traditions of Member States. Importantly, the Charter applies whenever Member States implement or apply EU law, as clarified by the **Akerberg Fransson** judgment.

### Understanding Participation and Public Expression

ASSEDEL recently had the opportunity to participate in a training session led by **Gerhard Ermischer, President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe**. Drawing on more 25 years of experience within the Council of Europe, Mr. Ermischer offered valuable insights into the relationship between institutions and civil society, the role of conventions, and the importance of inclusive participation in democratic processes.

He emphasised that public expression, especially when loud or emotionally charged, is often misinterpreted as unreasonable. This misunderstanding can discourage meaningful dialogue. For this reason, the Council of Europe created its conventions, in order to empower people, provide them with the tools to understand the issues that affect them, and encourage their ability to express their concerns clearly. Facilitators play a crucial role in helping individuals recognise what truly matters to them and communicate it effectively.

### From Frameworks to Action in Council of Europe Conventions

Mr. Ermischer highlighted how, in workshops related to the European Landscape Convention, discussions often centred on how to transform the framework of the Convention into tangible action. Once a country signs a convention, it becomes part of its national legal framework. However, in contrast with the European Union which treats such commitments with great seriousness, the Council of Europe lacks the strength to enforce its texts. Nonetheless, the strength of implementation depends on whether monitoring mechanisms exist. Some conventions contain strong monitoring systems, while others face difficulties in the process of monitoring.



### Training Session with Gerhard Ermischer, President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

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### **Democracy Under Pressure: Pap Ndiaye Warns of a New Era of Global Instability**

Eighty-one years after the end of the Second World War, the Council of Europe remains one of the continent's central pillars for protecting human rights, promoting democracy, and safeguarding the rule of law. As the founding and hosting country...

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**DECEMBER 4, 2025**

Eighty-one years after the end of the Second World War, the Council of Europe remains one of the continent's central pillars for protecting human rights, promoting democracy, and safeguarding the rule of law. As the founding and hosting country, France plays a particularly important role within this institution. During a recent meeting with the Ambassador of France to the Council of Europe, several key themes emerged regarding the mission of the French Representation and the challenges facing Europe today.

### **A Mission Rooted in Diplomacy and Democratic Values**

The Permanent Representation of France acts on behalf of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its core mission is to participate in the daily work of the Council of Europe's bodies especially the Committee of Ministers ensuring that France's positions and values are reflected in decisions, recommendations, and monitoring procedures.

The Ambassador emphasized a simple but fundamental truth:

**"Defending human rights is politics."**

Without strong institutions, education, and political commitment, democratic systems can collapse.

Diplomacy, he stressed, remains the most important tool to prevent conflict. It is not merely protocol it is a mechanism for understanding, negotiation, and ultimately, peace. In his words, diplomacy is "a way of doing things" and of protecting democratic societies from drifting into violence.

JUNE 6, 2025

On the 3rd of June ASSEDEL had the pleasure to be hosted at the Permanent Mission of Austria for a roundtable discussion with some Austrian representatives from Ambassade and various Council of Europe bodies who kindly accepted to participate in this event.

This discussion outlined once again how crucial is establishing a shared space for dialogue where civil society and institutional representatives can come together to build a stronger Society spreading awareness and understanding on Human rights.

The event fostered an insightful exchange on critical issues such as : anti-corruption efforts, cybercrime, health, biomedicine and diplomacy. Meaningful contributions came from the following distinguished speakers:

**Ms Aloisia Woergetter**

**Ambassador of the permanent mission of Austria to the Council of Europe**, moderator of the event, explaining the pivotal role played by diplomacy and ministry of foreign affairs in the final decision about shared healthcare, biomedicine and anti corruption policies at international level.

**Dr. Judith Herrnfeld**

Public Prosecutor in Austria

Participated in the **plenary of the Cybercrime Convention Committee**, offering legal insights into the evolving challenges of cybercrime at the European level.

**Prim. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Andreas Valentin, MBA**

Interim Member of the Board of Directors of the Viennese Health Association

Took part in the **plenary of the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health**, emphasizing the ethical dimensions of healthcare policy.



**Roundtable at the Permanent Mission  
of Austria to the Council of Europe**



**Summary: "Roundtable at the Permanent Mission of Austria"**

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L'Association européenne pour la défense des droits et des libertés



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