



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

The Court's Priority Policy

In June 2009 the Court adopted a priority policy with a view to speeding up the processing and adjudication of the most important, serious and urgent cases. It established seven categories ranging from urgent cases concerning vulnerable applicants (Category I) to clearly inadmissible cases dealt with by a Single Judge (Category VII). It has now conducted a review of that policy and with effect from 22 May 2017 has made some amendments to the priority categories.

Interstate cases

Firstly it decided to place inter-State cases (Article 33 of the Convention), which were hitherto in Category II, outside the priority policy in view of their special character which in any event attracted special procedural treatment.

Persons deprived of liberty

The Court also extended the definition of cases falling under Category I to cover situations where “the applicant is deprived of liberty as a direct consequence of the alleged violation of his or her Convention rights”.

The amended table defining the various categories of priority is appended below.

I.	Urgent applications (in particular risk to life or health of the applicant, the applicant deprived of liberty as a direct consequence of the alleged violation of his or her Convention rights, other circumstances linked to the personal or family situation of the applicant, particularly where the well-being of a child is at issue, application of Rule 39 of the Rules of Court)
II.	Applications raising questions capable of having an impact on the effectiveness of the Convention system (in particular a structural or endemic situation that the Court has not yet examined, pilot-judgment procedure) or applications raising an important question of general interest (in particular a serious question capable of having major implications for domestic legal systems or for the European system)
III.	Applications which on their face raise as main complaints issues under Articles 2, 3, 4 or 5 § 1 of the Convention (“core rights”), irrespective of whether they are repetitive, and which have given rise to direct threats to the physical integrity and dignity of human beings
IV.	Potentially well-founded applications based on other Articles
V.	Applications raising issues already dealt with in a pilot/leading judgment (“well-established case-law cases”)
VI.	Applications identified as giving rise to a problem of admissibility
VII.	Applications which are manifestly inadmissible