

ATINER CONFERENCE PAPER SERIES No: LAW2013-0875

Athens Institute for Education and Research

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ATINER's Conference Paper Series

LAW2013-0875

**The Judges of the European Court of
Human Rights as a Specific
Socioprofessional Group of
International Legal Influence**

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URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm

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ISSN 2241-2891
23/1/2014

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This paper should be cited as follows:

Bayashou, A. (2013) "The Judges of the European Court of Human Rights as a Specific Socioprofessional Group of International Legal Influence"
Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: **LAW2013-0875**.

The Judges of the European Court of Human Rights as a Specific Socioprofessional Group of International Legal Influence

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Abstract

In this paper the European Court of Human rights as a judicial organ of the Council of Europe is considered as an association of people with their personal, social and professional characteristics. The aim of the paper is to analyze the judges of the ECHR as a community of people ensuring the functioning of the Court in Strasbourg. The urgent need for this analysis is provided by the inevitability of judges representing the national legal systems and by the influence of their decisions and judgments on the national legal systems and the national perception of the principles of international law. The budget of the ECHR has become 50 times higher in 2013 than in 2000. The group is consolidated by their cooperation in real time, hence establishing a common identity. Earlier, the reforms of the Court have been concerning the human rights provided by the Convention of 1950. However, nowadays the reforms refer mostly to the structural reorganizing of the Court and procedures of judges' activity. The research question to be studied in the paper remains the following: to what extent is the role of judges in international law system to be changed? The inherent logic of the paper provides arguments to support its main thesis: the influence of judges is concentrating on advisory opinions within the Grand Chamber. The arguments are enforced with the interdisciplinary approach combining the sociological approach towards international relations, organizational sociology, law of international organizations.¹

Keywords: ECHR, international law, sociology of international relations

¹The paper refers to the theses of the research conducted at the Faculty of Sociology under the supervision of the director of the MA program "Global sociology", associate professor Rimma Tangalycheva and scientific supervisor of the postgraduate student associate professor Alexander Kuteynikov.

The influence of international judicial organs in modern times can hardly be underestimated. Being platforms for to compromise such organizations allow states to negotiate, still remaining independent actors in international relations. The activities of such type of international organizations or organs of international organizations vary from meeting at the highest level to educational programs for students.¹ Among a great variety of their functions such conventional bodies invest in the development of international law, if noting the judicial activism in regard with the stimulation of new norms in international law. Therefore, international judicial bodies and associations have supported the promotion of Responsibility to protect at the conceptualization level in 2001 and at the level of real practice of the UN in Sudan in 2006, in Libya in 2011, in Syria in 2012, which has been claimed for extending the concept of “genocide” and “human rights” and narrowing the concept of “sovereignty”.² The topicality of the issue is supported by the steadily growing number, resources and influence of such structures on international processes.

In addition to the thesis, international judicial bodies are regarded as a specific type of international organizations in this paper that urges for an interdisciplinary approach to apply in the analysis of such integral bodies in international hierarchy. Such organizations could be analyzed through the study of the main characteristics of the groups of people constituting the organization’s functioning, as an example, the study of the judges, the registry, the applicants, the national representatives. For instance, created as conventional mechanisms, international judicial bodies act with their independent budgets and secretariats.³ To illustrate the thesis, the budget of the European Court of Human Rights has been estimated in terms of 66,8 million Euros at the beginning of 2013m excluding the costs for the maintenance of the infrastructure of the Human Rights Building in Strasbourg, which is 50 times higher than in 2000.⁴ A growing number of applications to the ECHR cannot be treated as an indicator of effectiveness of that structure, as the number of judgments does not increase. Figure 1 emphasizes that only 4% of all applications have been judged from 1959 to 2010 in all 47 countries. For this reason, the texts of the ECHR judgments ceased to be convincingly substantiated, the average time of an application pending before the Courts

¹The influence of international organizations is treated under the judicial and sociological definition of an international organization. See Kuteynikov A. International intergovernmental organizations as a class of international structures and as a judicial phenomenon. State and law, 2013, №3, pp. 72-79 (Kutejnikov A. Mezhdunarodnye mezhpriavitelstvennyye organizacii kak klass mezhdunarodnyx struktur i kak yuridicheskij fenomen. Gosudarstvo i pravo, 2013)

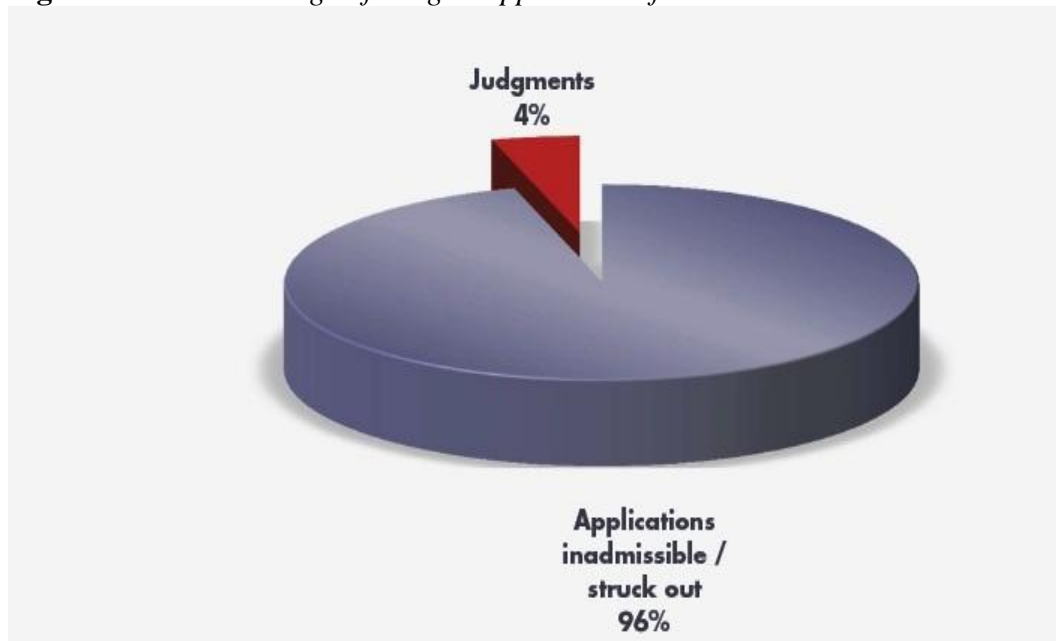
²See the final document of the World summit 2005. Resolution 60/1. Responsibility to protect// Сайт ООН - <http://www.un.org/ru/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml> // http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/outcome2005.shtml // <http://www.un.org/ru/preventgenocide/rwanda/bgresponsibility.shtml> (accessed 13.03.2013)

³See Kuteynikov A. International intergovernmental organizations as a particular class of organizations, Sociological studies, №11, 2011, pp. 79-87 (Kutejnikov A. Mezhdunarodnye mezhpriavitelstvennyye organizacii kak osobyj klass organizacij. Sociologicheskie issledovaniy, №11, 2011, pp. 79-87)

⁴How the court works. The ECHR official website // <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/The+Court/How+the+Court+works/Budget/> (accessed 13.03.2013)

formation increased. The states delayed the implementation of the Courts judgments as similar applications began to accumulate. Besides the problem of breaking the increasing accumulation of pending cases before the Court. In the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that possesses international legal personality the priority for internal documents and cases as means for the determination the rules of law. Article 21 of the Rome Statute fixes that “The Court shall apply ... in the first place, this Statute, Elements of Crimes and its Rules of Procedure and Evidence”.¹ Articles 115 and 116 of the Rome Statute regulate the budget of the Court envisaging coverage of the expenses of the Court and the Assembly of States Parties including its Bureau and subsidiary bodies from assessed contributions by States Parties and the United Nations, voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations and other entities.²

Figure 1. *The Percentage of Judged Applications from 1959 To 2010*³



At the same time, the paper examines international judicial organizations and organs as integral communities of people with their specific personal and social characteristics. The distinction of functions inside an organization and among organizations is reflected in the groups of people who make the functioning of an organization or an organ possible and attribute the legitimacy to an international organization representing a member-state. Supporting the arguments of a number of Russian scholars of international organizations the

¹See Rome Statute. UN documents // [http://untreaty.un.org/cod/icc/statute/english/rome_statute\(e\).pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/cod/icc/statute/english/rome_statute(e).pdf) (accessed 13.03.2013)

²Article 115, 116. Ibid.

³Annual Reports. The European Court of Human Rights. Official website: <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Reports+and+Statistics/Reports/Annual+Reports/> (accessed 18.03.2013)

author strongly believes that the activities of such organizations could be analyzed through the investigation of the social characteristics of those groups of people who bear the functions of an organization.¹ The judges of international judicial organizations and organs representing national legal systems are analyzed in the suggested interdisciplinary framework, which underlines the importance of specific characteristics of the group involving the distinctive features of the group interactions inside an organization within its organs or departments and outside an organization within states and other international organizations.

On the basis of its establishment the European Court of Human Rights appears to be a conventional organ of the Council of Europe founded by signing the Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in 1950 that entered into force on 3 September 1953.² This multilateral treaty attributes to the ECHR the function to deliver judgments on individual applications from the citizens against the member-states and advisory opinions towards the implementation of the norms of the Convention in national legal systems. Nevertheless, the Statute of the Council of Europe puts an emphasis on the Committee of ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly as the organs of the Council of Europe.³ At the same time, the Rules of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the supervision of execution of the ECHR stipulate the procedure of state reporting for the implementation of the judgments through the Committee of ministers before the Court.⁴ In accordance with Protocol No 11 to the Convention the Court meets on a regular basis in Strasbourg and consists of competent experts – a number of judges equal to the number of High Contracting Parties.⁵ The aim of this paper is to highlight the influence of judges on the national legal systems in regard with their characteristics as a particular socioprofessional group of actors in international relations. Methodologically the sociological approach towards international relations remains the basis of the study. Following this approach, actors and participators of international relations are differentiated. For instance, the actors are represented by states and international organizations, whereas the groups of people who stay as states representatives or personnel of an organization function as participators in

¹See Kuteynikov A. International intergovernmental organizations. A theoretical sociological analysis. St Petersburg State University, 2012. pp. 221-225 (Kuteynikov A, *Mezhdunarodnye mezhpriavitelstvennyye organizacii: teoretiko-sociologicheskij analiz*. St Petersburg, 2012)

²European Court of Human Rights. Official website // http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/50Questions_ENG.pdf (accessed 09.03.2013)

³Statute of the Council of Europe. Official website. // <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/001.htm#FN1> (accessed 09.03.2013)

⁴Supervision of execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The official website of the Council of Europe. // http://www.coe.int/t/cm/humanrights_en.asp (accessed 09.03.2013)

⁵Procedure for electing judges to the European Court of Human Rights. Information document prepared by the Secretariat of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe/ 27 October 2011 // http://www.assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2011/27102011_procedureelections_juges_E.pdf (accessed 09.03.2013)

international relations. In this regard, the European Court of Human Rights is analyzed as an actor and it's the judges, personnel, applicants are considered to act as participators of international relations. The judges of the Court are integrated by a number of particular features. The judges of the European Court of Human Rights represent a real social group in regard with their interaction and capacities. The permanent judges of the Court in Strasbourg is the most important component of the influence of that body on the international law, because their consultative framework allows the pros of national legal systems of a variety of state to meet together for a flexible system of international justice.

More importantly, the group of the judges of the European Court of Human Rights includes, at first, the 47 permanent judges as the core of that group. In 1959 the Court united only fifteen member-states, the judges were elected on the nine years periods with the rotation of the judges every three years.¹ At second, the group of the judges includes the sub-group of *ad hoc* judges who are appointed by states for particular cases. Moreover, more than 140 *ad hoc* judges work in the modern ECHR.² At third, from the sociological perspective candidates on the position of a permanent judge might be included into the socioprofessional group of judges includes. At forth, the ex-judges of the Court in Strasbourg are included into a sub-group as, on the one hand, they remain connected to the legal systems they represented and bear the qualities of judges in the ECHR, on the other hand, they do not refuse international activities. The representatives of those sub-groups interact within the ECHR structure and with national governmental structures; they are united by time and space and possess common personal and social characteristics, which makes the social group construction possible. At the same time, the main characteristics of this group are more evident in its core, whereas in the sub-group of candidates to become a judge of the ECHR there may be no of those characteristics at all.

The influence of judges on the national legal systems has been steadily growing. Figure 2 shows the trends of applications allocated to a judicial formation, decided inadmissible or struck-out applications by the judges. However, the number of judgments delivered remains approximately the same from 2006: approximately 1385 judgments per year in general. In 1994 in was the very beginning when applications started to be allocated directly to the Court and due to the Protocol No 9 the applications from individuals started being regarded as a cornerstone of the European law system.³ At the same time, before 2012 the total number of applications including communicated to states and inadmissible exceeded the number of allocated to a judicial

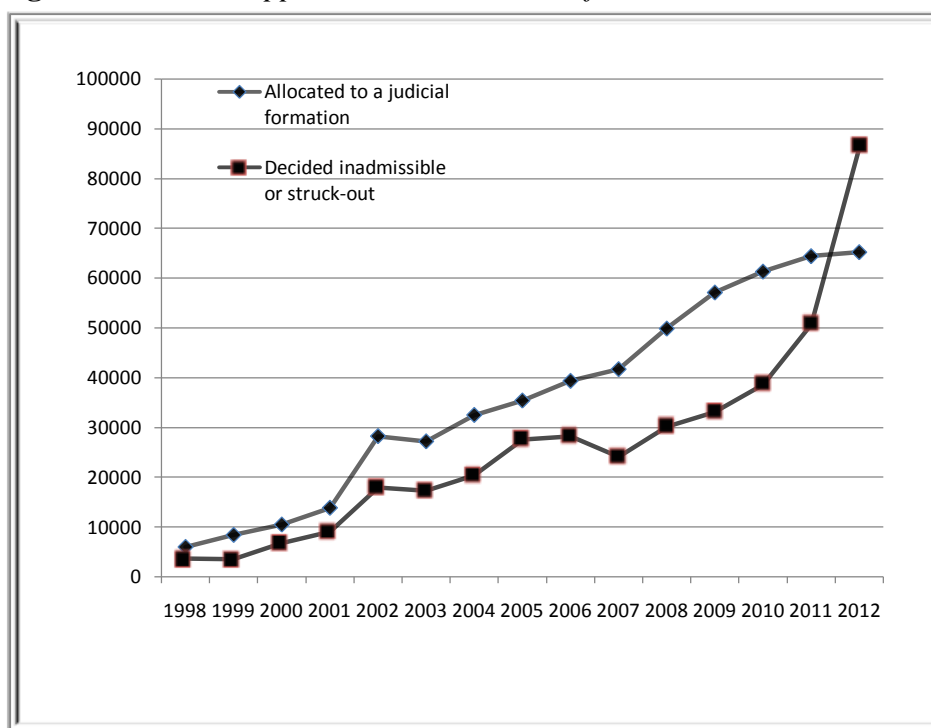
¹See the Court in brief. The ECHR official website. // http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/35A9C0D7-414B-44AB-9F5E-FE46251B855F/0/Court_in_brief_RUS.pdf (accessed 09.03.2013)

²See list of ad hoc judges. The ECHR official website // <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/The+Court/The+Court/Judges+of+the+Court/Adhocjudges.htm> (accessed 27.03.2013)

³Global Governance Watch. The ECHR // <http://www.globalgovernancewatch.org/security/the-european-court-of-human-rights>(accessed 14.06.2013)

formation. After 2012 one should notice the decrease in the number of applications pending before a judicial formation. This trend is considered as success of a single-judge formation to decide on inadmissibility of applications. These trends stress the shift towards the improving role of a judge in the ECHR. In addition to that, that mechanism together with the main characteristics is also being changed in Protocol No 15 and Protocol No 16, which underlines the improving influence of the judges of the Court in Strasbourg on national legal systems and international law in general. Due to the fact the Court and the Convention are always developed through Protocols, the characteristics of that group urges for a thorough analysis to describe the mechanisms of the influence of the European Court of Human Rights on the development of international law and national law. Consequently, what are the main characteristics of the judges of the Court in Strasbourg as a socioprofessional group of international legal influence?

Figure 2. *Trend in Applications to the ECHR from 1998 to 2012¹*



¹Annual Reports. The European Court of Human Rights. Official website: <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Reports+and+Statistics/Reports/Annual+Reports/> (accessed 18.03.2013)

Legal Status

The formal capacities of the judges are stipulated by Article 21 of the Convention. According to the first paragraph of the article “The judges shall be of high moral character and must either possess the qualifications required for appointment to high judicial office or be jurisconsults of recognized competence”.¹ In addition to that, the same article stresses that “The judges shall sit on the Court in their individual capacity” and “... shall not engage in any activity which is incompatible with their independence, impartiality or with the demands of a full-time office; all questions arising from the application of this paragraph shall be decided by the Court”.²

According to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe the judges and their families enjoy immunities as the representatives at the Committee of Ministers while exercising their functions and during their journeys. The immunities are prolonged after the term of exercising as a judge ends.³

The independence of the judges is regulated by Article 6. The case-law of the Court interprets the thesis of the article. Besides the Convention the immunities of the judges is regulated by Recommendation No. R 94 (12) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the independence, efficiency and role of judges⁴, the opinions of the Consultative Council of European Judges,⁵ European Chapter on the Statute for judges.⁶ The concept of the immunity of the judges includes external immunity from states and internal immunity from the Court. The external immunity is provided by the appointment and electing procedure and the execution of their decisions nationally. Among internal mechanism to ensure their immunity it is worth mentioning a financial reward, the minimum payment of a national judge of the highest rank guaranteed in the Court, the absence of all types of discrimination, the independent budget of the

¹Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 21. ECHR, the official website // http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf (accessed 14.06.2013)

²Ibid. Paragraph 3.

³General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe. Documents of the Council of Europe // <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/002.htm> (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁴Recommendation No. R 94 (12) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the independence, efficiency and role of judges // <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=534553&SecMode=1&DocId=514386&Usage=2> (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁵Consultative Council of European Judges. The Council of Europe, official website // [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CCJE\(2002\)OP3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CCJE(2002)OP3&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864) (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁶European Chapter on the Statute for judges. The Council of Europe, official website // http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round4/European-Charter-on-Statute-of-Judges_EN.pdf (accessed 14.06.2013)

ECHR.¹ In regard with international principles of jurists, judges and prosecutors a state cannot consult or dismiss a judge from the office, which is the first real argument for the judges' immunity.

The points are confirmed by actual practices of potential judges of the ECHR: in national terms, they exercise functions of highest judicial formations as the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, and the Supreme Court of Arbitration. Their activities include considerable scientific framework, a significant number of articles and monographs. As a rule, the experience of potential judges is not limited by national borders: they are involved in preparation of international declarations in the UN, human rights commissions. Actually, it is worth noting that though the ECHR judges operate in individual capacity, they do not refuse their national identities as the purpose of the ECHR as a conventional mechanism is to take the advantages of national legal systems for the establishment of flexible international justice.²

The Appointment and Elections Procedures

Article 22 of the Convention regulates that a state provides a list of candidates for the post of a judge to be elected in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe by a majority of votes cast from a list of three candidate nominated by a state. However, a state has a right to appoint an *ad hoc* judge for a particular case.³ For instance, the nominating function is enjoyed by the Commissioner of the Russian Federation at the ECHR, the right to appoint an *ad hoc* judge is given to the President of the Russian Federation.⁴
4 5

The elections in the Parliamentary Assembly can be postponed in case of a withdrawal of a candidate or in case any of the nominated candidates does not match the requirements and principles provided by a great number of resolutions in the Council of Europe. The nominating procedure includes resume and interview.⁶ Resolution 1646 of the Parliamentary Assembly

¹See Neshataeva T. Evaluation of a professional judge's practice: the issues of legal regulation. // The Journal of the Russian Academy of Justice 2009 (31), pp. 67-78 (Neshataeva T. Ocenka professionalnoj deyatel'nosti sudi: problemy pravovogo regulirovaniya. // Zhurnal rossijskoj akademii pravosudiya, 2009)

²The argument is provided by a series of interviews with experts from the ECHR and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow under the MA research.

³Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 22. ECHR, the official website // http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁴See the Ministry of Justice in the Russian Federation official website // http://minjust.ru/ru/about/organisational_structure (accessed 25.01.12)

⁵Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention // <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/194.htm> (accessed 25.01.12)

⁶Resolution CM/Res(2010)26 on the establishment of Advisory Panel of Experts on Candidates Candidates for Election as Judge to the European Court of Human Rights // <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1704555&Site=CM>

stresses that nominating procedure shall be organized on the basis of open competition, non-discrimination.¹ In 1999 the recommendation of the Parliamentary Assembly 558 fixed the principle of gender equality in nominating and electing procedures. Resolution 1841 stresses, at the same time, that a list of nominated candidates may include representatives of one gender when the national judges who represent the same gender, is more than 40% of all national judges.² Resolution 1646 underlines that the Parliamentary Assembly may refuse a list in case correspondence with all principles is not found. The particularities of those procedures allow arguing for the specific connectedness of the judges with states and national organs within its immunity.

Personal Characteristics and Work Mechanisms

No judge can be consulted or dismissed from the office by a state, unless the other judges decide by a majority of two-thirds that a judge has ceased to fulfill the required conditions.³ The real practice has no illustrations for that. A judge has a right to self-withdrawal in case a judge may be personally interested with a case. In this case an ad hoc judge is appointed and elected who also has such right. Protocol No. 14 increased the period of a judge in the office back to nine years, though the judges cannot be reelected.^{4 5} A draft project of Protocol No. 15 should be mentioned here as it dismiss the limit of 70 years as a maximal age of a judge, which underlines the intention of member states to legitimate the ECHR judgments by increasing the average age of the judges.⁶

The judges operate in a single-judge formation to consider on the admissibility of an application, a three-judges committee to regard an application in accordance with the case-law practice, a chamber of 7 judges to

¹Resolution 1646 (2009), Paragraph 2

²Resolution 1082 (1996), Recommendation 1429 (1999), Resolution 1366 (2004), Recommendation 1649 (2004), Resolution 1426 (2005), Resolution 1627 (2008), Resolution 1646 (2009), Resolution 1841 (2011), Order 558 (1999)

³Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 23. ECHR, the official website // http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁴Article 21, Protocol No.14 // http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁵Convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 23. ECHR, the official website // http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf (accessed 14.06.2013)

⁶See Draft explanatory report to Protocol No. 15// Committee of experts on the reform of the court, 31 October 2012, DH-GDR(2012)R2 Addendum IV: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standard_setting/cddh/DH_GDR/DH-GDR\(2012\)R2_Addendum%20IV_Draft%20Explanatory%20Report_Protocol%20no%20%2015_ECHR%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standard_setting/cddh/DH_GDR/DH-GDR(2012)R2_Addendum%20IV_Draft%20Explanatory%20Report_Protocol%20no%20%2015_ECHR%20(2).pdf) (accessed 25.04.2013), Opinion of the court on Draft Protocol No. 15 to the European convention on human rights, adopted on 6 February 2013: http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/58BF65B4-3124-4E7D-A09A-BCDC97CD8036/0/Court_Opinion_P15_EN.pdf (accessed 25.04.2013)

decide on the merits and the Grand Chamber to deliver a judgment in case of appeal or in case of important issues connected with the implementation and interpretation of the norms of the Convention. The official negotiating is allowed in the office, informal talks and decision-making is restricted. The mechanism of a judgment in such structures as the ECHR is more likely to be a voting procedure where the individual opinion of judges are fixed and submitted out of the main body of a judgment.

Work Context

The context of the capacities of the judges provide a serious influence of the judgments and work procedure inside the Court. One of the topical characteristics of such context is the overload of the ECHR by pending applications. With the stable number of judgments per year the constant increase in the number of applications since 1998 should be observed.¹ Protocol No. 11 has changed the ECHR structure and made a large number of applications possible. The judges are overloaded. In 2012 the Court broke this trend due to a single-judge formation that helped to consider in the inadmissible criteria of applications. Hence the individualism of judges is worth underlining here that is observed in separate opinion of judges.

The Development of International Law and Influence on National Legal Systems

The influence of the judges is operated through the practice of the ECHR. The case-law of the Court is regarded as a part of national legal systems. The influence, from a constructivist perspective, cannot be limited by official documents, as it concentrates at the discursive national level, creating a legal discourse for social behavioral practices of citizens. The judges of the Court are regarded as bearers of that influence. However, sitting in the office in Strasbourg the Court may not take into account the national legal, cultural and social contexts. The case of *Alekseyev v. Russia* illustrates how not-natural a judgment might be.² However, the member states cannot refuse implementing the decisions of the Court. The analysis of influence is strongly recommended to be conducted in terms of its steady increase as the budget of the ECHR increases as the role of advisory opinions of the Grand Chamber on the implementation of the norms of the Convention and the national legal regulation does.

¹See Annual reports. // Annual Reports. The European Court of Human Rights. Official website: <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Reports+and+Statistics/Reports/Annual+Reports/> (accessed 18.03.2013)

²Case of *ALEKSEYEV v. RUSSIA*, JUDGMENT 11.04.2011 // ECHR cases database: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/> (accessed 18.03.2013)

Conclusions

The judges of the ECHR represent a social and professional group of experts who are bearers of the Court's influence on national legal systems and the development of international law.

At first, the topicality of the main characteristics is provided by the fact that the member states of the Council of Europe cannot refuse implementation of the ECHR judgments in their national legal systems and are to regulate social practices of the citizens with the case-law of the Court in Strasbourg. The group of permanent judges unites the advantages of national legal systems allowing the Court to develop into an effective conventional mechanism of flexible international justice due to the independence of that structure.

At second, the social group of judges is a community operating with common characteristics in common time and space regulated by different national contexts. The judges possess a number of characteristics that make the analysis of that influence towards national legal systems and international law possible.

At third, a thorough analysis of those characteristics urges for interdisciplinary approach in addition to the theses mentioned above. The strategic work of the Court needs intensive reforming. Earlier, the reforms represented by Protocols were referred to the substantive meanings of the norms of the Convention. Actually, the present reforms refer to the structure of the Court, the judges formations and the Registry. Hence the High Conference in Interlaken has started the reforming of the Court.¹ Since the plan of activities was adopted, further it was supported at Izmir and Brighton Conferences.² Among objectives it is worth noting that the reforms of the Court focus on the decrease of the pending applications, the reforming of national law and the implementation of the norms of the Convention by advisory opinion of the Grand Chamber, the growth of the assignments to the Court, the establishment of a department on inadmissible applications.

At fourth, the influence of the ECHR will be accompanied by the improvement of the role of permanent and *ad hoc* judges. The draft Protocol No. 16, for instance, improves the influence of advisory opinions by the 17 judges in the Grand Chamber as the priority of the Court functioning is given to the reforms in national legal systems rather than to individual applications as it was before.³

The particular characteristics of the group of judges are to be analyzed regularly due to the increasing influence of the case-law of the ECHR and the

¹See Entin M. Prospects of the Interlaken process.a // Internet Journal. AllEurope.RU 1(40) - http://www.alleuropa.ru/old/index50ce.html?option=com_content&task=view&id=1419 (accessed 18.03.2013)

²See the official website of the Court. The reforms of the Court // http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/8AC14EA9-A92B-4875-A76A-4E21A8B3AC5A/0/ENG_20120418_BRIGHT_ON_DECLARATION_FINALE.pdf (accessed 27.03.2013)

³See the official website of the Council of Europe // http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDAR_DSETTING/CDDH/REFORMECHR/ (accessed 27.03.2013)

intensive reforming of the Court. The mechanisms of electing, nominating, or appointing as the interaction of the ECHR with the states, or the objectives of the Court are constantly being changed. To understand the influence of the European Court of Human Rights on the national legal systems and the development of international law one needs a thorough analysis of the characteristics of its judges as a particular socioprofessional group of participators in international relations.

Further, the methodology proposed above might be reasonable to be applied to the studies of international organizations, especially, international judicial bodies. Such methodology could be concentrated on the specific groups of people and their main characteristics. The relations between different circles are also worth analyzing. As an example, the ECHR activities might be studied through the analysis of the main characteristics of the three groups of people: the judges, the registry and the applicants to the Court. In addition to that the other international judicial bodies might be analyzed through the other groups of people.