



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

## Guidelines on Hearings by Videoconference

1. In light of the sanitary conditions prevailing in Europe, and in particular in the Court's host State and in the States where the parties to a case are based, it may be necessary to adapt the usual format for hearings before the Court, conducting the proceedings through videoconference technology.
2. This assessment is for the President of the Grand Chamber or of the Chamber to make (Rule 64 of the Rules of Court).
3. The President will consult the parties to the case, including, as relevant, third parties who have been granted leave to participate in the oral hearing. The parties need to provide clear, reliable and up-to-date information about any sanitary measures in force or anticipated in their country that affect their freedom to travel to the Court and back to their home country, for the purpose of attending the hearing.
4. The decision to hold the hearing by videoconference will be communicated to the parties some 4 weeks before the date of the hearing, allowing them to make the necessary logistical preparations in cooperation with the Registry's IT Department.
5. Hearings by videoconference will be conducted in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Rules of Court (Title II, Chapter VI), and as far as possible in accordance with the Court's usual practice. The parties will receive all relevant information from the Registry in the latter regard.
6. To ensure that the hearing takes place in satisfactory conditions, the parties must cooperate closely with the relevant services of the Registry, which will specify the necessary technical requirements (see technical annex).
7. Subject to compliance with the necessary technical requirements, it is for the parties to decide about the location from which they shall participate virtually in the hearing. Their location must be suitable for the conduct of legal proceedings before the Court.
8. The arrangements put in place by the authorities, in terms of premises and technical equipment, should also include the possibility for the applicant's representative to benefit from them, if he or she so wishes. The applicant's representative can choose to make separate arrangements, in consultation with the Registry.
9. Participants should observe the usual modes of professional attire and conduct. It is not necessary for legal representatives to rise from their seats at any stage of the proceedings.
10. While it is for the parties to decide how many representatives and advisers to retain, a maximum of two representatives per party will be visible on-screen during the hearing.
11. In order to preserve the public character of hearings by videoconference (Article 40 of the Convention, Rule 63 of the Rules of Court), the proceedings will be recorded and will be made available for viewing on the Court's website in the usual way.

## Technical Annex

### **Technical requirements**

The IT Department of the Registry recommends the following:

- A computer (desktop or laptop) running a recent operating system (exact requirements will be communicated to the Parties)
  - Tablets/iPads and phones are not supported.
- The [Google Chrome](#) web browser (please do not use any other browser such as Safari, FireFox, Brave, Edge or Internet Explorer).
- To ensure audio quality: A headset with a microphone (preferred) or an external microphone is strongly recommended rather than a computers built-in microphone.
- A fast and stable Internet connection that is suitable for a prolonged video conference.

We strongly recommend the following:

- A fast and stable wired Internet connection rather than a wireless (WiFi) connection;
- A separate Internet connection (WiFi or 4G) should also be available as a backup;
- If you are required to use WiFi, please sit as close as possible to the WiFi access point;
- Limit activities on your network that could impact the Internet bandwidth (e.g. downloading, streaming or other video conferences).

### **Testing**

To ensure the smooth running of the Hearing:

- A minimum of two pre-hearing tests will be carried out by the Registry with all participants in order to confirm that the technical requirements are met and ensure the requisite audio and video quality.
- For all pre-hearing tests it is important you connect from the same physical location and use the same equipment as you will during the hearing. Please inform the Registry if this is not possible.
- Contact details (email addresses and telephone numbers) are required for all participants and relevant technical staff.

### **Connecting to the Hearing by Video Conference**

- Details on how to connect will be communicated. This information is confidential so please do not share the information or links provided.

### **Participating in the Hearing by Video Conference**

- Interpretation is available in English and French.
- If the hearing is suspended for questions and answers the Court will disable the audio and video for all participants to ensure privacy.

- The hearing is recorded and will be made available as a Webcast on the Court's [Internet site](#). There is no live stream of the hearing.

**Technical Issues**

You will receive a series of steps to follow in case of technical issues (e.g. you are unable to connect or experience audio or video problems). You will also receive the telephone number of a technician in case you require assistance.