

EU FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

"I think my human rights have been violated by the EU country in which I live ... where can I defend myself as a citizen?"



EU COUNTRIES

Level: **National**

Sacred text: **Constitutions**

Who judges: Higher courts, usually named **"Supreme court"** or **"Constitutional court"**

Who can directly appeal: **NGOs, Companies, Citizens**

Modern democracies protect the rights of their citizens by making them kind of "sacred": they are **enshrined in constitutions**, which stand above the law.

Constitutions are harder to modify than basic laws: that way, a government can't (easily) write laws violating such basic rights.

This is not specific to EU countries ... but **such a protection is required to be allowed to join the EU!**

Your case involves EU law

No EU law is involved



EUROPEAN UNION

Level: **the 27 EU countries**

Sacred text: **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

Who judges: **CJEU, the Court of Justice of the European Union**

Who can directly appeal: **Governments, EU institutions, NGOs, Companies, Citizens**

If you lost your case at the national level but an EU law is somehow involved, the EU adds an extra level of protection.

The **EU Charter**, signed in 2000, is part of the EU Treaties: they are above national law and constitutions.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Level: **46 member countries**, all EU countries included ... and more!

Sacred text: **European Convention on Human Rights**

Who judges: **ECHR, European Court of Human Rights**

Who can directly appeal: **Governments, NGOs, Companies, Citizens**

All EU countries are individual members of the ECHR, **besides their belonging to the EU.**

That way, even if your case does not involve EU law in any way, you are protected by a higher level than your country!

DID YOU KNOW?

Other international courts exist in the world, but with a big difference: most are dedicated to settle disputes between states and/or organizations only so **individual citizens can't directly go to them.**