

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



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!

No EU law is involved

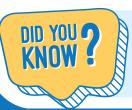
Sacred text: **European Convention on Human Rights**

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!



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.