

# European Convention on Human Rights: Summary of its Main Articles

Article 1 – obligation to respect human rights.

The state has the responsibility to respect every individual's human rights, as set out in the Convention itself.

Article 2 – right to life.

We all have the right to life, and not be killed by another person. The state must protect people's lives by enforcing the law, protecting those in danger, and safeguard against accidental deaths.

Article 3 – prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Nobody, under any circumstances, can torture or abuse anyone else. We should never be treated in ways that cause us serious physical or mental suffering.

Article 4 – prohibition of slavery and forced labour.

Nobody should ever be made a slave or forced to work against their will. There are minor exceptions to this article, for example in some cases it is legal to require someone to work in if they're in prison or the military services.

Article 5 – right to liberty and security.

We can only be detained in certain circumstances, for example if we've been convicted by a court, or if we're considered to be a danger to ourselves.

Article 6 – right to a fair trial.

We have the right to a fair and public trial, within a reasonable amount of time, by an independent and unbiased judge. If

charged with an offence we should be assumed innocent until proven guilty.

Article 7 – no punishment without law.

All crimes should be clearly defined by the law. We can only be found guilty of a criminal offence if there was a law against it at the time the act was committed. Once found guilty of a crime we cannot later be given a heavier sentence.

Article 8 – right to respect privacy and family life.

This right exists to protect four things: our family life, our home, our private life, and our correspondence. We have the right to live with our family and our loved ones. Respect for the home guards against intrusion into where we live, or to protect us being forced from where we live without good reason. Respect for private life protects our personal freedoms, including respect for our sexuality, the right not to be placed under unlawful surveillance, or for us not to have personal information spread about us against our will. Respect for correspondence allows for us to communicate with others freely and in full privacy.

Article 9 – freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

We all have the right to hold religious and other beliefs. We also have the right to change these beliefs when we choose. We should be free to worship and express our beliefs both in public and private spaces.

Article 10 – freedom of expression.

We have the right for us to hold our own opinions, to express our views and ideas, and to share information with others. This article can protect our right to express views that some may find unpopular or offensive.

Article 11 – freedom of assembly and association.

We have the right to join with others to protect our common interests, to form trade unions political parties. Importantly this article also exists to protect our right to hold meetings, and to assemble in groups to peacefully protest.

Article 12 – right to marry.

We have the right marry who we want to, and to start a family.

Article 13 – right to an effective remedy.

If our rights are violated then we must be able to challenge this through legal means.

The state must make arrangement for this, and there may be compensation for any damage caused to us.

Article 14 – prohibition of discrimination.

Our rights should never be denied to us due to any form of discrimination, whether due to our 'sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'.

Article 15 – derogation in time of emergency.

A state can choose to ignore some specific rights in the ECHR at a time of war or other emergency threatening the life of the nation, but any removal of rights should be limited to those absolutely required by the situation. A state must always make sure these measures are consistent with its obligations under International Law.

Article 16 – restriction on political activity of non-nationals.

A state can restrict the political activity of non-nationals, but this does not apply to the nationals of EU member states when in an EU country.

Article 17 – prohibition of abuse of rights.

Nothing in the ECHR allows for any state, group or individual to destroy the rights and freedoms that the convention protects.

Article 18 – limitation on use of restriction of rights.

The restrictions allowed by the convention should not be applied for any other purpose than those explained in the convention itself.