



Ms Tonje Meinich

Chairperson

CDDH *ad hoc* negotiation Group and the European Commission
on the Accession of the European Union
to the European Convention on Human Rights (“47+1”)

11 February 2020

Re: Request for observer status in the CDDH *ad hoc* negotiation Group and the European Commission on the Accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights (“47+1”)

Dear Madam Chairperson,

The AIRE Centre, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists welcome the resumption of the work on the accession of the European Union (EU) to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Our organisations followed the previous intergovernmental work and contributed with substantial written comments on various issues addressed in the Draft revised agreement on the accession of the European Union to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (see Annex).

Our organisations remain at the disposal of the negotiating group to provide substantive comments and views about the EU’s accession to the ECHR. Our extensive experience as observers of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and as legal advisers, applicants’ representatives and third-party interveners before the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union, as well as promoters of respect for human rights through the application of Council of Europe treaties and standards and EU law, makes us particularly well-placed to provide a meaningful contribution to the deliberations of this working group.

For these reasons, we kindly request the *ad hoc* negotiation Group to grant our organisations observer status at its meetings. This would significantly contribute to the transparency and openness proclaimed by the Committee of Ministers in the Helsinki Ministerial Decision on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe adopted in May 2019. In this decision, the Committee of Ministers agreed to “*examine further options for strengthening the role and meaningful participation of civil society organisations, and national human rights institutions in the Organisation, with the view to increasing its openness and transparency towards civil society, including access to information, activities and events*”.

It would further be in line with the duty of the European Union’s institutions to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society and to conduct their work as openly

as possible in order to ensure the participation of civil society and thus promote good governance (Articles 11 TEU and 15 TFEU).

We thank you and the CDDH *ad hoc* negotiation Group and the European Commission on the Accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights (“47+1”) for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,



Eve Geddie
Head of European Institutions Office and Advocacy Director
Amnesty International



Nuala Mole
Founder and Senior Lawyer
The AIRE Centre



Director, Europe and Central Asia Programme
International Commission of Jurists

Non-extensive list of NGO contributions and comments to the negotiations on EU accession to the ECHR:

- NGO Statement on the CJEU opinion, December 2014: <https://www.icj.org/eu-court-opinion-a-major-setback-for-human-rights-in-europe/>
- NGO Statement, 6 September 2013 <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/EuropeanUnion-AccessionECHR-Statement-2013.pdf>
- NGO Briefing paper, March 2013: <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/EUAccessionECHR-Paper-Joint-2013.pdf>
- NGO Briefing paper November 2012: <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/NGO-submissions-on-EU-accession-to-ECHR-final-version.pdf>