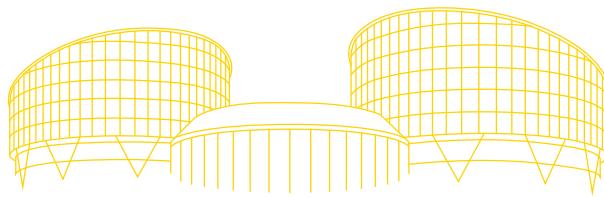


The ECtHR at the Grassroots Level

Grassrootsmobilise Final Report



Directions in Religious Pluralism in Europe:
Grassroots Mobilisations in the Shadow of European Court
of Human Rights Religious Freedoms Jurisprudence

2014-2019

European Research Council Starting Grant

Research aims and objectives

Grassrootsmobilise set out to ascertain the impact of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR, or the Court) religion-related case law on the ground, i.e., on grassroots level social actors with a vested interest in the issues addressed by such case law. With 'religion-related' defined broadly to include issues likely to mobilise religious or secularist, atheist or humanist social actors (e.g., social ethics concerns regarding same-sex rights and bioethical questions regarding assisted reproductive technology or euthanasia, in addition to religious minority rights, religious majority concerns, religion-state relations, and the public presence of religion), Grassrootsmobilise examined the Court's impact on a rather broad range of social actors. It also sought, in so doing, to speak to the question of whether, how and the extent to which that Court is influencing religious pluralism in Europe.

Research at the grassroots level took place in four country contexts – Greece, Italy, Romania and Turkey – all countries in which strong relationships between religion and national identity, and between church and state, render highly salient, in theory at least, the Court's pronouncements that bear the potential to influence the public place of religion. Meanwhile the selection of cases represents a spectrum of levels of democratisation and Europeanisation, with Italy and Greece being rather more consolidated democracies (and with membership in the European unification project established in 1958 and 1981 respectively), and Romania and Turkey less consolidated democracies (and with more recent membership in the EU for Romania in 2007 and a continued negotiation process with Turkey). Grassrootsmobilise aimed to identify the significance of each of these dimensions when it comes to the impact of the ECtHR on the ground.

There is a burgeoning literature studying the impact of the European Court of Human Rights from the top down, in terms of Court-ordered national legal reform in human rights protections in general and specifically in the domain of religion. Grassrootsmobilise entailed a novel approach to the study of the ECtHR by examining the Court's impact from the bottom up. Drawing on North American socio-legal theory which has established that the study of top-down direct effects of case law, such as demands for legal reform, is rather limited in its potential to understand the far broader impacts that courts may have on society, Grassrootsmobilise focused instead on the indirect or 'radiating' effects of the ECtHR and its case law in order to better understand their broader implications for the issues they address.

Specifically regarding the field of religion, Grassrootsmobilise drew attention to the significant gap between the weight and significance of the Court's judgments relevant to religion in terms of a. the engagement of the Court with questions

often central to national and European-level debates and controversies around religion and decisions taken sometimes calling for radical legal change, and sometimes seemingly radical in not calling for legal change, and b. in terms of the grassroots level engagements with the Court's religion-related case law, on the one hand, and on the other, the relatively little awareness of such case law at the grassroots level, and the even less active engagement with that case law in terms of taking inspiration from it for social actors' pursuit of their own rights.

Grassrootsmobilise pushed the boundaries of existing relevant research by applying the North American socio-legal theory on indirect effects to the European context. It provided the first systematic study of the impact of the ECtHR religious freedoms jurisprudence at the grassroots level, but it also entailed the first ever systematic study of grassroots level impact of the ECtHR in general, and many of its conclusions are generalizable beyond the domain of religion. Through the broad dissemination of its results (both in terms of international conference presentations and written publications), Grassrootsmobilise has drawn substantial scholarly attention to what was a little considered dimension of European international law and institutions.

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However, through assessment of the data generated by qualitative interview-based research, Grassrootsmobilise established that, in fact, impact of the Court at the grassroots level is not strictly correlated to levels of awareness of the Court's case law. Rather, the research pointed to particular ways that messages of and about the Court are transmitted, translated, and filtered in and within each country context (a topic explored thoroughly in a special issue of a journal and in an edited volume), and the varying results of the latter in terms of encouraging grassroots level rights claims. (See below for more on main findings)

Research methods

Grassrootsmobilise combined different mainly qualitative but also quantitative research methods engaging a variety of disciplines:

First, in-depth interview research informed by social anthropology was conducted with grassroots level actors in four different countries (over 200 semi-structured interviews in total). The interview research was critical for establishing insight into social actors' levels of awareness of and utilisations of the ECtHR and its case law relevant to religion in pursuit of their own rights. This aspect of the research included special attention to two particular topics which were identified by the postdoctoral researchers as highly salient in each country context: religion and education, and the legal status of religious minorities.

Second, Grassrootsmobilise included a study of mass-media references to ECtHR religion-related case law. This media study was designed to help the research team understand levels of access to details about the Court and its case law through mass media, but also the breadth and quality of information about the Court and its case law provided through mass media.

Third, in recognition of the potential 'trickle-down' effects of the ECtHR case law through national level courts, Grassrootsmobilise also entailed a study of references to the religion-related case law of the ECtHR in the national high courts of each country case study. This study helped the research team appreciate the importance of differences across the cases in terms of where the ECtHR stands within the national legal order (i.e., does ECtHR jurisprudence take precedence over national law in cases of conflict between the two?). It also revealed the latter as intimately linked to processes of Europeanisation of each country and institutional relations with the European Union.

Fourth, Grassrootsmobilise postdoctoral researchers in each country selected one particular ECtHR case against the country in question for a thorough study of mobilisations leading to and in the aftermath of that case. This study offered new insight into the full life of religion-related claims before the ECtHR and into the dynamics between pre- and post-ECtHR mobilisations.

Finally, Grassrootsmobilise included a study of 'grasstops' mobilisations around religion-related case law – i.e., forces working at the European and transnational levels seeking to influence the Court's engagements with and ultimate handling of religion-related cases. This aspect of the research shone light on the potential chasm between grassroots and grasstops awareness of and engagements with ECtHR religion-related case law and, more importantly, on the potential repercussions of such chasms.

Main findings

a. The ECtHR bears a tremendous yet largely untapped potential to influence the rights consciousness and rights pursuit of grassroots actors with a vested interest in religion-related matters. Against the backdrop of North American socio-legal scholarship on the potential indirect or 'radiating' effects of courts (see Fokas and Anagnostou for a relevant overview), Grassrootsmobilise results suggest the indirect effects of the ECtHR, in the field of religion-related case law at least, are relatively muted (though not negligible, nor consistent from one case to the next (See below)).

It is important to note the breadth of 'religion-related' in Grassrootsmobilise: the scope of the research was defined by issues likely to mobilise religious or secu-

larist, atheist or humanist social actors and thus includes social ethics and bioethics issues such as same-sex marriage and assisted reproductive technology. Therefore Grassrootsmobilise has established that the Court is a relatively underused resource, in terms of its potential indirect effects, for a rather broad range of social actors (i.e., those with a vested interest in religious minority rights, religious majority concerns, religion-state relations, the public presence of religion, non-discrimination for LGBTI individuals, bodily autonomy for women regarding their reproductive rights, etc). However, certain groups stand apart for their relatively higher levels of awareness of and engagements with the Court and its case law (See below).

b. The most conspicuous reason for this unfulfilled potential is the low levels of awareness of the Court's case law exhibited by grassroots level actors (though with significant variations in the latter based on a number of factors presented below). Through the in-depth interview research conducted with grassroots social actors it was established that in the country cases under examination, relatively few social actors without some legal expertise know of specific ECtHR cases related to religion, with the exception of one especially high-profile case (that of *Lautsi v. Italy*, on the presence of the crucifix on Italian school walls), and sometimes of a handful (at best) of cases against social actors' own states. However, the indirect effects of the Court and its case law are not directly correlated to levels of awareness of the latter; rather, the concept of the Court's 'impact' must be nuanced to take into account the various ways 'messages' about the Court and its case law are transmitted to grassroots actors and the varied effects of the latter (See below).

c. Comparisons between the country cases showed the significance of such factors as national political and legal opportunity structures (e.g. to what extent is political lobbying likely to be more effective in a given country context on a given issue?); where the ECtHR stands within the national legal order (de jure and de facto); where the majority faith stands within the 'national religious order' (given the fact that in all cases there exists some hierarchy between religious groups); and the national track record in relation to the ECtHR (both in terms of the volume and content of the case law against the state in question, and the extent to which states tend to implement the Court's decisions). Relations with and attitudes towards the EU also influence many grassroots actors' orientations towards the ECtHR. So too institutional relations with the EU: in Romania and Turkey the recent and on-going (respectively) EU accession processes have given rise to relatively higher levels of grassroots awareness of ECtHR case law relevant to social actors' interests, not least because mechanisms have been instituted in these legal systems whereby magistrates are made aware of and incentivized to reference ECtHR case law. The attention that the EU pays to ECtHR judgments as a measure for monitoring the human rights situation in accession countries and recent members still under some monitoring mechanisms enhances opportunities for litigation in the ECtHR and, by extension, attention paid to that court.

Main findings cont'd

d. There are also significant variations from one conscience-based group to the other. For example, groups more likely to litigate such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Scientology, as well as secularist and general human rights NGOs, often employ in-house lawyers, and such groups have extensive experience litigating before the ECtHR; both factors (general litigiousness and employment of legal counsel) tend to underpin higher levels of awareness of the Court and its case law amongst members of these groups. At the opposite end of the spectrum, representatives of migrant Muslim communities tend to exhibit lower levels of awareness of and interest in ECtHR religion-related case law, both because religious freedom is perceived as more of a 'luxury' in comparison with more immediate concerns such as the right to residence, and also in part because recourse to the ECtHR is often perceived, or condemned, as a fundamentally anti-national act. The perspective of the Court as an 'adversary of the nation' goes well beyond Muslim communities and can be found especially amongst smaller religious minority groups in each country.

e.

The Court has an important impact at the grassroots level, but that impact tends to be through messages about the Court that are 'translated' and transmitted by lawyers or other 'interpreters' of the case law. The Court's impact is also located in the disproportionate influence of a few well-known cases so that conceptions of the Court are skewed accordingly, and through the Court's reputation in a given country context based on its previous engagements with religion-related case law. Therefore grassroots impact of the Court is highly contextual.

f.

Case law in general and the ECtHR specifically are perceived by many social actors as only of interest to and 'penetrable' by people with legal expertise or, at least, to people interested in litigating themselves. (By extension, groups less prone to litigation in general tend to be less informed about the ECtHR and its relevant case law). This is by far the most prevalent reason presented for grassroots actors' low levels of engagement with ECtHR case law.

g.

Yet grassroots social actors exhibit a strong interest in learning about the Court and its case law relevant to their concerns. By default the interviews often became sites of learning for grassroots actors, due to the keen interest of many interviewees to glean information about the Court and its case law from the postdoctoral researchers conducting the interviews. But social actors exhibit an interest in learning through relatively

effortless and 'unintimidating' means which vernacularize the Court's decisions for non-legal audiences. This suggests that novel approaches to disseminating information about the Court and its case law could go a long way towards enhancing religious pluralism on the ground in Europe and towards bridging a gap between citizens and this European institution.

Promises and challenges of multidisciplinarity

Grassrootsmobilise is a fundamentally interdisciplinary exercise, employing a research methodology shaped by the fields of law, social anthropology, political science, media studies, and sociology of religion, and it was carried out by a multidisciplinary research team comprised of social anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists of religion and one lawyer.

This exercise has not been without its challenges: as in all multidisciplinary work, in Grassrootsmobilise the research team individually and collectively had to overcome a number of conceptual hurdles in order to arrive at the chosen methodology, as well as in the implementation of that methodology throughout the data collection, and in the analysis of the data. But it has also been an especially intellectually rewarding process: Grassrootsmobilise's topic of study lies at the intersection between law, politics and religion, and each researcher brought insights from his or her own field of study which helped define more precisely what exactly is happening at that intersection. The researchers then proceeded to speak to their own disciplinary audiences about the latter.

Grassrootsmobilise speaks to and has different impacts on different scientific research communities. For legal studies Grassrootsmobilise has provided the first ever systematic study of the indirect effects of the ECtHR. The research has shared critical insight into how limited those indirect effects are, when compared with the vast potential the Court carries in this regard. Grassrootsmobilise has established a much-needed European socio-legal scholarship on the indirect effects of international courts, and in so doing has also yielded novel insight into the indirect effects of international courts.

For the field of sociology of religion, Grassrootsmobilise has drawn attention to how little social actors with a vested interest in religion-related case law know about the ECtHR relevance of the ECtHR in terms of the issues it addresses which are of close concern to religious and secularist publics, on the one hand, and the low levels of awareness of that role played by the Court, on the other, whereas when these issues are in the political realm the same publics are highly aware and often mobilise around them. Perhaps equally importantly, Grassrootsmobilise has brought to a sociology of religion audience the various ways social actors' general conceptions the Court and its religion-related case law are skewed and how these differ from one country context to the other, depending on the particular experience of that given state with the Court.

Further, through its focused study of two particular issue areas – religious education and the legal status of religious minorities – Grassrootsmobilise added to the extremely rich literature on both topics in the fields of political science and social anthropology a wholly new approach, one focused on how the Court's case law relevant to both topics has (or has not, depending on the case) influenced grassroots level engagements with rights claims around religious education and religious minority legal status, respectively.

Dissemination: **Conferences**

Grassrootsmobilise results have been widely disseminated through over 60 presentations at **local, national and international conferences**, including **13 presentations of the research programme as a whole by the Principal Investigator** (including a keynote address to the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR) Conference in Barcelona, July 2019), **16 individual presentations** by the postdoctoral researchers of their country case study data, and **8 full panels** (i.e., with multiple presentations by members of the Grassrootsmobilise team in panels expressly showcasing Grassrootsmobilise) at:

a the International Lesbian and Gay Association Annual Conference, Athens, 28-31 October 2015 on 'Grassroots Mobilisations at the Intersection of Religion with LGBT Rights'

b the International Conference on 'Religions and Human Rights', University of Padua, 14-17 April 2016 on 'The Legal Status of Religious Minorities: Exploring the Impact of the European Court of Human Rights'

c the European Association for the Study of Religion Annual Conference, University of Helsinki, 28 June - 1 July 2016, on 'Mobilizations around Religion and Education in the Shadow of the European Court of Human Rights'

d the Annual Conference of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies, St. Hugh's College, Oxford, 8 -11 September 2016, on 'Freedom(s) of Religion and the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights'

e the International Society of Public Law Annual Meeting, University of Copenhagen, 5-7 July 2017, on 'The European Court of Human Rights at the Grassroots Level: Exploring the Court's Role in Governing Religious Pluralism on the Ground'

f the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 31 August – 3 September 2017, on 'Measuring Legitimacy at the Grassroots: Mobilizations in the Shadow of the ECtHR'

g the Grassrootsmobilise Conference 'Between State and Citizen: Religion at the ECtHR', Athens, 4 May 2018, on 'Negotiating religious pluralism in the shadow of the Court: insights from Grassrootsmobilise'

h the University of Athens 'Religions and Human Rights' Interdisciplinary Conference, 13-16 February 2019, on 'Religious Education in the Greek Context: Papa-georgiou v. Greece and beyond'

Publications

JOURNAL ARTICLES

'Directions in Religious Pluralism in Europe: Mobilizations in the Shadow of European Court of Human Rights Religious Freedom Jurisprudence', *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2015, pp. 54-74 – [Effie Fokas](#)

'Comparative Susceptibility and Differential Effects on the Two European Courts: A Study of Grassroots Mobilizations around Religion', *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2016, pp. 541-574 – [Effie Fokas](#)

'Winning in the Parliament, Losing in the Courts – Catholic Bio-politics in different venues: The Case Of Italy', *Estudos de Religião*, 2016, Vol. 30, No. 1, 11-27 - [Alberta Giorgi](#)

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'The Legal Status of Religious Minorities: exploring the impact of the European Court of Human Rights', *Social Compass*, 2018, Vol. 65, No. 1, pp. 25-42 – [Effie Fokas](#)

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- 'The European Court of Human Rights and minority religions: messages generated and messages received' [Effie Fokas and James T. Richardson](#)
- 'The European Court of Human Rights at the grassroots level: who knows what about religion at the ECtHR and to what effects?' – [Effie Fokas](#)
- 'The 'filtering effects' of ECtHR case law on religious freedoms: legal recognition and places of worship for religious minorities in Greece' – [Margarita Markoviti](#)
- "Genuine" religions and their arena of legitimization in Italy – the role of the ECtHR' – [Alberta Giorgi & Pasquale Annicchino](#)
- 'Legal provisions, courts, and the status of religious communities: a socio-legal analysis of inter-religious relations in Romania' – [Mihai Popa and Liviu Andreeescu](#)
- 'Beyond legal victory or reform: the legal mobilisation of religious groups in the European Court of Human Rights' – [Ceren Ozgul](#)

Symposium: Religion and Education in the Shadow of the European Court of Human Rights, Politics and Religion, 2019, Vol. 12, Supplement S1:

- 'Introduction: Religion and Education in the Shadow of the European Court of Human Rights' – [Effie Fokas](#)
- 'The "Radiating Effects" of the ECtHR on Social Mobilizations Around Religion and Education in Europe: An Analytical Frame' – [Dia Anagnostou and Effie Fokas](#)
- 'In-between the Constitution and the European Court of Human Rights: Mobilizations Around Religion and Education in Greece' – [Margarita Markoviti](#)
- 'Do Not Cross the Line: The State Influence on Religious Education' – [Pasquale Annicchino and Alberta Giorgi](#)
- 'Religion and Education in Romania: Social Mobilization and the "Shadow" of the European Court of Human Rights' – [Liviu Andreeescu and Mihai Popa](#)
- 'Freedom of Religion, the ECtHR and Grassroots Mobilization on Religious Education in Turkey' – [Ceren Ozgul](#)
- 'The European Court of Human Rights in National Struggles around Religion and Education' – [Dia Anagnostou and Liviu Andreeescu](#)

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'Grasstops v. grassroots perspectives on the Sindicalul case: from small-town feud to transnational strategy', (in progress, draft journal article) - Liviu Andreeșcu, Effie Fokas and Mihai Popa

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– *The European Court of Human Rights and minority religions: messages generated and messages received*, eds. Effie Fokas and James T. Richardson, (2018) Abingdon: Routledge:

– *Religioni di minoranza tra Europa e laicità locale* [Minority religions between Europe and local secularism], Alberta Giorgi (2018) Milan: Mimesis

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– *The European Court of Human Rights on the Ground: Grassroots Level Impact of Religious Freedoms Jurisprudence*, ed. Effie Fokas (forthcoming)

– *Between State and Citizen: Religion at the European Court of Human Rights* (tentative title) ed. Effie Fokas (forthcoming)

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'Balancing the autonomy of religious institutions with the right to a private and family life? A commentary on Fernández Martínez v. Spain', ELIAMEP Briefing Notes, 2014, No. 32 - *Panagiota Emmanouilidou*

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'Too Little, Too Late for Religious Freedom in Greece?', Public Orthodoxy blog of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center of Fordham University, 10 May 2018 – *Effie Fokas*

'Local Secularisms in Italy', Nonreligion and Secularity Research Network (NSRN) blog post, 10 May 2019 – *Alberta Giorgi*

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Findings Soundbites

Grassroots evaluations of the Court

One of the most fascinating findings concerns the different ways actors interpret the Court's potential role, ranging from "the Court says that each country is free to do as it wishes" (Greek Orthodox theologian), to "We are lucky the ECtHR exists!" (Bahai representative). This suggests the Court's utility is "in the eye of the beholder".

The geographical diversity in religious freedom in Italy emerged clearly through our research. As an interviewee from the Buddhist Union explained, for example: "on places of worship we have the regional rules... it's no coincidence that the most restrictive laws on places of worship are in the regions governed by the right." This fragmentation of religious rights has significant effects on expectations of ECHR-enshrined rights, given that even Italian Constitution-enshrined rights are not universal.

Expressions of ambivalence

Many respondents express a sense in which pursuing one's grievances nationally is one thing but at the ECtHR is quite another, being perceived more as an act of betrayal of one's nation. As one Turkish minority faith respondent put it, "We are sons of this country, we don't want to complain about our country [to international institutions such as the ECtHR]." In Greece, one religious minority representative declared "discrimination against a religion is proportional to the 'noise' and trouble the respective religion makes". This is a direct reference to Jehovah's Witnesses, especially noisy in their long list of ECtHR wins against the Greek state, and particularly discriminated against in the Greek context.

“ *In Turkey, no lawyer trusts to the national legal system. The presence of ECtHR is a guarantee for us... every time someone is in a legal struggle for his or her rights, they say "We will go to ECtHR! If nothing else, we will go to ECtHR". You know there is a saying in Turkish "Do not feel so proud of yourself my Sultan, there is Allah greater than you." Now we say "Do not feel so proud the courts in Turkey, there is ECtHR greater than you!"* **”**

Turkish Lawyer for an Atheist Association

“ *Not that I'm a passionate nationalist, but I think the nation needs to be protected. If you can settle it here, there's no point going to wash our dirty laundry in public there, all over Europe* **”**

Representative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bucharest

Observing the transnational dimension

It was surprising to learn just how well connected the religious sector of Romanian civil society is to actors in the transnational legal field and how this impacts grassroots level awareness of the most recent ECtHR case law. The latest Strasbourg case law regarding the protection of same-sex couples has featured in heated debates in the national public sphere, especially after a country-wide citizen initiative supported by national and transnational faith-based NGOs has demanded that a referendum be organized so as to define "marriage" in the Romanian Constitution as "the union between a man and a woman".

Soundbites cont'd

A thirst for knowledge...

Though learning about grassroots' actors perceptions of and mobilizations around the ECtHR was the main objective of the research, very often representatives particularly of smaller religious communities sought, through our discussion, to learn more about the Court, about its jurisprudence and the ways to litigate.

“What happened next?”, asked one interviewee, after having been told the basics of the SAS case. “How much can the ECtHR get involved in a country's legislation?”, he asked later in the course of the interview, and “Which are the European countries that accept all ECtHR decisions?”

Romanian Representative of an Islamic NGO

In the shadow of Lautsi

One Italian Buddhist group representative questioned why she had consented to giving an interview on the topic: “we do not care about the ECtHR: we thoroughly studied the [Lautsi] case and we totally disagreed with its outcome”. Another religious minority representative, with reference to Lautsi, called the Court a “double -edged sword” i.e., you go there to expand your rights and you come back in a far weaker position, especially because – as the Court communicated in Lautsi –“each and every state must find its own path of pluralism... the governance of religious diversity is a national concern. This is the real meaning of the margin of appreciation”. These words represent a perception that the Lautsi decision fully undermines the notion of the Court as the defender of the weak, of the minority.

The effects of Lautsi on Greek society reflect the extent to which an ECtHR judgment may directly influence actors' decision to mobilize (or not to mobilize) in another country In the words of a Greek human rights lawyer:

Perspectives on the Court's limitations

“We are quite critical towards the ECtHR, especially as far as it concerns the legitimacy of the Court to take positions which are later represented as being fully enforceable in member states. In reality we consider it as being quite weak...The Court is often used to advance a partisan ideological agenda...”

Representative of Organizers of Family Day in Italy

“But we don't pay a special attention. If there was a political system in Turkey that takes the ECHR decisions seriously and implements them, then we would pay more attention maybe but in Turkey the government does not even implement ECtHR decisions that concerns domestic violations to freedom of religion. So you do not pay attention to ECtHR decisions regarding Hungary, Romania, Russia or Greece unless it is your specialty.”

Turkish Protestant Church Association Representative

Thank you ERC!

Grassrootsmobilise is the first European Research Council-funded project in the social sciences to be awarded to a researcher based in Greece. In funding Grassrootsmobilise, the ERC has made a significant impact on the local research area. Certainly the prestige of the ERC put Grassrootsmobilise in a position to draw the people it did to Athens, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief – both the previous one, Heiner Bielefeldt, and Ahmed Shaheed, who currently holds the post, and the 30 other speakers invited to participate in the high-profile Grassrootsmobilise public event and conference held in Athens in May of 2018. The public event and conference featured some of the most prominent scholars of religion and the ECtHR in Europe and beyond, as well as practitioners (including former ECtHR judges and legal activists with extensive experience litigating before the ECtHR). Local and national media coverage of these events was extensive (including print media and public radio, both prior to and in the aftermath of the events), and scholars from all over Greece attended (in addition to the approximately twenty scholars who travelled from abroad to attend as audience members). By all accounts these events were amongst the most fruitful scholarly gatherings on the topic of religion and the ECtHR; the conference proceedings are currently being prepared for publication.

In addition to Grassrootsmobilise as a centripetal force for scholarship in the field, the project also worked centrifugally in its local research environment, mainly through invited presentations of the data by the Principal Investigator. The Principal Investigator presented Grassrootsmobilise data to five conferences and public events in Greece, two workshops in Athens, and as part of three summer school courses in three different Greek localities and two Athenian university seminars. Further, the postdoctoral researcher on the Greek case study presented her data to one conference in Athens and one in Thessaloniki.

The engagements with the project of Greek theologians is especially noteworthy, not least because of the coincidence of the Grassrootsmobilise intervention in the ECtHR *Papageorgiou v. Greece* case on religious education and of many Greek theologians' meticulous work on reform of the Greek religious education system. This fact brought the project and its data especially close to the Greek community of theologians, particularly through a workshop organized under the auspices of Grassrootsmobilise and bringing together theologians and representatives of the atheist claims represented by Papageorgiou, amongst others. Through all of the above Grassrootsmobilise has left a tangible mark on the Greek scholarly community.

For scholars of the ECtHR, as well as practitioners in the Council of Europe, Grassrootsmobilise has raised incisive questions regarding the legitimacy of the Court, as well as regarding where and why the system of transparency promotion is deficient in practice. Finally, this research has drawn attention to the existing demand for more vernacularized information about the Court and its case law, for grassroots social actors who do not themselves have legal expertise. As noted above, novel approaches to disseminating information about the Court and its case law could go a long way both towards bridging a gap between citizens and the European Court of Human Rights, in terms of the former's awareness of the rights the Court affords them and uses of its case law to defend their own rights. This finding, it is hoped, may leave an impact on the Court itself through an effort to address the disparity between the Court's potential and actual impact at the grassroots level.

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to all contributors,

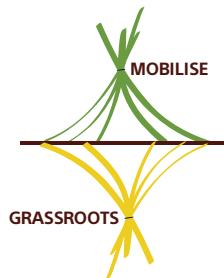
our thanks

Grassrootsmobilise owes its success to the many individuals who contributed their time and effort to the grassroots level research in the four country case studies, and to those globally who contributed to the 'grassroots' research conducted by the Principal Investigator.

The research also benefited significantly from the input of external scholars who either participated in one or more of our project meetings or gave feedback on our written work, and/or contributed with questions and comments at our conference presentations.

Finally, the research team enjoyed the enthusiastic support of our distinguished Advisory Board, many of whom went well beyond the call of duty in their continued engagements with the project.

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