

**International Conference**  
***The ‘Greek Case’ in the Council of Europe:***  
***A Game Changer for International Law and Human Rights?***  
**Athens, 12–14 December 2019**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Greece’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe, following pressure by European countries and institutions for the violation of human rights by the military junta in Greece (1967–74). The Athens-based Netherlands Institute and the Danish Institute, in collaboration with the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, the Swedish Institute and the Norwegian Institute are organizing an international conference on the history and legacy of this emblematic case. The conference is supported by the Carlsberg Foundation.

In 1967 Denmark, Norway, and Sweden – later joined by the Netherlands – used the European Commission on Human Rights (ECHR) system against the Greek Colonels. On 12 December 1969 Greece withdrew from the CoE to avoid expulsion. The reports of the ECHR constituted a paradigmatic condemnation of the regime by an international body. In light of the growing debates about the usefulness and impact of international pressure on authoritarian states for democratization and the rule of law, the so-called ‘Greek case’ emerges as an important moment in the history of international law, human rights, and transnational justice. The case marked the first time a member of the CoE risked expulsion because of human rights violations. Thus it became one of the pioneer inter-state cases over fundamental rights in European human rights law, generating important discussions about the Junta’s brutal regime in other European parliaments. The ‘Greek case’ was also exceptional in that there were no apparent national interests (at least at first sight) on behalf of the plaintiff countries. A decisive moment in the protection of human rights, it was, moreover, instrumental in shaping human rights standards and policy, particularly with regard to torture. Finally, it established non-governmental transnational movements, such as *Amnesty International*, and solidarity campaigns as important players in international law and politics.

Addressed to early-career researchers and established specialists, this conference welcomes papers across disciplines, including history, politics, law and international relations, human rights, trauma studies, social movements, and European studies. Topics may include the following:

1. What drove the ‘plaintiff’ countries, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands, to sue Greece?
2. What made the ‘plaintiff’ countries take the lead in this case in a European context, as opposed to the passivity of other liberal governments in Western Europe? Did internal pressure (such as press, NGOs, public opinion) play a role in their pro-active engagement?
3. How did the ‘Greek Case’ contribute to the delegitimization of the Junta at home and abroad?
4. What was the role of transnational activism locally and internationally? How did the 1969 events affect solidarity campaigns?
5. What was the impact of the ‘Greek Case’ on the definition of torture? How did testimonies about the Junta’s torture practices affect international public opinion?
6. Did the ‘Greek Case’ have an impact on other authoritarian regimes in Europe at the time?
7. What were the short- or long-term socio-legal effects on countries like West Germany, Great Britain, France and the USA?
8. What was the impact of the 1969 mobilisation on transitional justice in Greece during the *Metapolitefsi* era? To what extent and in what ways was the ‘Greek case’ instrumentalized in national politics?
9. What lessons can be drawn from the ‘Greek case’ regarding the current legitimacy crisis of the ECHR system and the limits of European integration in influencing national (authoritarian) politics?
10. What was the impact of and what issues are raised from the ‘Greek case’ regarding trauma, the politics of responsiveness, and the judicial process in light of the survivor testimonies presented in Strasbourg.

The conference languages are English (preferred) and Greek. Simultaneous translation will be provided if needed. Abstracts for 20-minute papers should be submitted in English (300 words maximum), accompanied by a 100-word biographical note, contact information, and affiliation; independent scholars are welcome to submit. Proposals should be submitted to [GreekCase1969@gmail.com](mailto:GreekCase1969@gmail.com) by **Friday, 15 February 2019**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 12 April 2019. Draft papers of maximum 2500 words (in English) will be pre-circulated, and they will be due for submission by 15 October 2019, at the very latest.

Keynote Speakers will include:

Judge Linos-Alexandros Sicilianos (President of the European Court of Human Rights)

Professor Barbara Keys (University of Melbourne)

Professor Wolfgang Benedek (Karl Franzens University, Graz)

Professor Mogens Pelt (Saxo Institute, Copenhagen)

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