



## Judgments of 2 February 2021

The European Court of Human Rights has today notified in writing four judgments<sup>1</sup>:

one Chamber judgment is summarised below;

a separate press release has been issued for another Chamber judgment in the case of *Strøbye and Rosenlind v. Denmark* (applications nos. 25802/18 and 27338/18);

two Committee judgments, concerning issues which have already been submitted to the Court, can be consulted on [Hudoc](#) and do not appear in this press release.

*The judgment summarised below is available only in French.*

### Dickinson v. Turkey (application no. 25200/11)

The applicant, Michael Dickinson, is a British national who was born in 1950. At the relevant time he had been living in Turkey for about twenty years and was teaching in two universities in Istanbul (Turkey). He is also a collage artist.

The case concerned Mr Dickinson's criminal conviction for insulting the then Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, through a collage exhibited by him which had criticised Mr Erdoğan's political support for the occupation of Iraq.

Mr Dickinson's work portrayed the Prime Minister's head glued to the body of a dog, which was held on a leash decorated with the colours of the American flag and had the following phrase pinned on its torso: "We Will not be Bush's Dog". He displayed it in March 2006 in a tent erected as part of the "Peace Fair", a protest event organised along the Beşiktaş Quay in Kadıköy (Istanbul).

Following this exhibition, the judicial authorities brought criminal proceedings against the person in charge of the demonstration, on a charge of insulting the Prime Minister.

Before the hearing in those proceedings, which was held on 12 September 2006, Mr Dickinson again displayed his work in the corridors of the court building, then outside that building, before the camera of two journalists and other people who were present in the street. Mr Dickinson was placed in police custody on the same day, then in pre-trial detention. He was released on 15 September 2006.

On the following day criminal proceedings were brought against him for insulting the Prime Minister, in application of Article 125 of the Criminal Code.

In March 2010 Mr Dickinson was ordered to pay a judicial fine of around 3,043 euros for having displayed his collage in the corridors of the court building and in the street. The court considered that Mr Dickinson's work was such as to humiliate and insult the Prime Minister and represented an attack on his honour and reputation. However, the court decided to suspend delivery of its judgment for five years.

<sup>1</sup> Under Articles 43 and 44 of the Convention, Chamber judgments are not final. During the three-month period following a Chamber judgment's delivery, any party may request that the case be referred to the Grand Chamber of the Court. If such a request is made, a panel of five judges considers whether the case deserves further examination. In that event, the Grand Chamber will hear the case and deliver a final judgment. If the referral request is refused, the Chamber judgment will become final on that day. Under Article 28 of the Convention, judgments delivered by a Committee are final.

Once a judgment becomes final, it is transmitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for supervision of its execution. Further information about the execution process can be found here: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/execution\\_-\\_blank](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/execution_-_blank)

In December 2015 the court set aside the judgment in respect of which sentencing had been deferred and ordered that the criminal proceedings be discontinued. It noted that Mr Dickinson had not committed any new intentional offences during the five-year period of suspension and that he had complied with the conditions attached to the supervision order.

Relying on Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention on Human Rights, Mr Dickinson complained about the criminal proceedings brought against him for his artistic work and the fact that he had been convicted at the close of those proceedings for having insulted the Prime Minister.

#### **Violation of Article 10**

**Just satisfaction:** 2,000 euros (EUR) for non-pecuniary damage

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**The European Court of Human Rights** was set up in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe Member States in 1959 to deal with alleged violations of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights.