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## The system of genres at the European Court of Human Rights: focus on case communication

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To talk of legal language in international courts is to talk of “usefully distinguishable” legal genres (Bhatia, 1983: 227), which form a *system of genres* (Bazerman, 1994), i.e. “the interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings” (Bazerman, 1994: 97). This study overviews the system of legal genres at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), which are represented by procedural documents of this supranational court. The study pursues the goal of describing a hitherto unresearched and semi-“occluded genre” (Swales 1996; Nikitina 2018) of *case communication*, contributing to research on the discursive practices at the ECtHR, which are rather scarce at the moment.

The analysis traces a typical flow of documents between the Court and the parties involved, overviewing generic structures and the language of communication. While initial applications to the ECtHR may be lodged in any national language of 47 Member States of the Council of Europe, starting from the case communication stage all interaction between the parties has to occur in one of the Court’s official languages, English or French. Case communications thus play a linguistically important role as they mark the passage from national into official languages in interaction with the parties. Case communications represent also a turning point in the procedure before the ECtHR as they acknowledge that the case has been deemed admissible and orient the following written procedure.

The results identify and describe recurrent patterns in case communications relying on a qualitative discourse- and genre-analytical toolkit combined with quantitative inputs using corpus linguistics methodology.

### References

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### Biographical note(s) of the author(s)

Jekaterina Nikitina has a PhD degree from the University of Milan. Her academic interests include legal discourse and legal translation studies, with a particular insight into legal phraseology, LSP theories and applications, knowledge dissemination dynamics, discourse of healthcare, medicine and bioethics, applying qualitative and quantitative, specifically corpus linguistics, analytical approaches. Currently, she holds a fixed-term research position at the Saint Camillus International University of Health and Medical Sciences (UniCamillus, Rome). Her published academic work includes publications on the discourse of human rights, legal translation and dissemination of bioethical knowledge, with a focus on medically assisted procreation and gene editing.

### Recommendation (for student section)

**Contact e-mail address**

jekaterina.nikitina@unicamillus.org

**Affiliation of the author(s)**

UniCamillus – International medical university in Rome

**Primary author:** Dr NIKITINA, Jekaterina (UniCamillus - Saint Camillus International Medical University in Rome)

**Presenter:** Dr NIKITINA, Jekaterina (UniCamillus - Saint Camillus International Medical University in Rome)

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