



REPORT on
Group Dissemination of
Information about the ECtHR:
ITALY

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In our fieldwork research, we stumbled upon many groups providing an extremely useful service to the communities they are in – that is, collecting and disseminating information about laws, regulations, jurisprudence and – more broadly – what occurs in the legal and judicial fields in relation to the topics and issues they focus on. Therefore, there are many websites, forums, Facebook pages and newsletters informing those who are interested about new developments in laws and caseload, at the national, local, and international level, and the European courts. This post will offer an overview of the Italian fieldwork.

Sources can be systematized into four categories. First of all, there are the more comprehensive resources, which aggregate and organize all the possible legal and judicial sources, such as [Diritto e Giustizia](#) news (Right and Justice News), [Diritto&Diritti](#), and [INFOleges](#) (a searchable database of laws and jurisprudence). Usually, these are resources provided by the State apparatuses, often in collaboration with universities, and/or by experts for experts – in order to keep track of all the developments in the field. Besides general resources, some websites cover more specific areas, such as the website of the Italian Data Protection Authority (Garante per la protezione dei dati personali), an independent authority set up to protect fundamental rights and freedoms in connection with the processing of personal data, and to ensure respect for individuals' dignity. In addition to official “expert-to-expert” resources, an interesting role is played by news agencies – the economic daily newspaper *Il Sole 24 ore*, for example, has organized a website, [Diritto24](#), reporting and commenting on news about laws and jurisprudence – it also offers to subscribers a weekly magazine that reviews ‘laws and jurisprudence’, including analyses of lawyers' strategies.

The second category includes thematic resources, usually set up by scholars, on a range of different topics. In relation to the areas of interest to our project, for example, we can include websites such as [OLIR – Osservatorio delle libertà ed istituzioni religiose](#) (Observatory of religious freedoms and institutions), which collects and organizes all the legal and judicial information on religion in Italy, with specific dossiers on various topics, such as ‘ritual slaughtering’ or ‘Islam’. It also includes news, articles and comments, and a small bibliography. The website aims to engage with an audience broader than the legal experts – and indeed, it has proved extremely useful to us, especially because it systematizes the information (laws, regulations, and jurisprudence) and translates the legal jargon. Actually, this ‘expert-to-non-expert’ kind of resource is of paramount importance to have an orientation into the wild wide field of laws and rights – and I'm saying that from a non-legal-expert position. That's why I find extremely interesting small experiments such as [FronteVerso](#), even though it's a non-thematic resource. FronteVerso tackles specifically the issue of the complexity of the expert language, and it issues a periodical newsletter in two columns, in which judicial rulings are reported in their original version on the right (verso) and translated in ordinary language on the left (fronte). The website claim is ‘knowing the right is a right’ – and the underlying idea is to provide a tool for improving the knowledge and awareness of ordinary citizens. In this sense, as the organizers state in their “about” section, it is an attempt to “nourish democracy”, undermining the experts' privilege. The newsletter does not cover specific themes or topics, but it deals with high-profile cases or, more broadly, with sentences likely to impact on ordinary citizens' lives.

The legal jargon is – indeed – difficult for non-experts. That is why a third category of resources, provided by politically – or socially – engaged legal practitioners, and scholars, includes information and updates for stakeholders. [ASGI](#), for example, is the Association of Juridical Studies on Immigration, and it aims at contrasting discriminations and fostering a culture of inclusion, by offering legal support, promoting campaigns and research on the topic, offering a searchable database of documents, laws, sentences and legal experts, and organizing advocacy initiatives. Among their many activities, dissemination plays an

important role. A sign of this attention to the communicational side of laws and rights, for example, is a project focusing on the relevance of translating administrative acts targeting foreign citizens. Other groups working on the collection and dissemination of information about laws and jurisprudence on specific areas are those dealing with labour laws – such as the portal [wikilabour](#), related to the workers' union CGIL. Among the advocacy groups, a relevant role is played by LGBT organizations, such as Rete Ledford (a network of lawyers promoting equality and LGBT rights). Broadly speaking, LGBT groups are quite attentive to the developments of laws and jurisprudence, both in Italy and elsewhere. Many groups offer, on their webpages, Facebook profiles, and through newsletters, information and updates on the legal developments on issues related to LGBT rights, sexuality, and regulations on adoption and parenthood. Besides organizing the information and providing a consistently updated archive, these resources aim to fill the gap between legal experts and ordinary citizens, by translating the legal jargon into common language, and offering an interpretation of the effects of regulations and jurisprudence on everyday life. [Articolo 29](#) is an example of this type of online resource. Founded in 2012, it provides information on the caseload on LGBT-related issues, both in Italy and elsewhere. Information is categorized per topic (gender identity, for example) and source (type of court, when dealing with jurisprudence, for example). Usually, information on other countries is reported in English, but the main features are translated – and, for particularly relevant jurisprudence, the whole text is translated into Italian. The archive includes a section on the cases pending before the European Court of Human Rights, and a 'resources' listing: laws and law proposals, European Union documents and studies, Council of Europe reports and recommendations, Italian regional and local regulations and jurisprudence, as well as juridical documentation. A specific section of the website deals with how the current regime works in the case of foreign citizens. Moreover, the website provides an interesting bibliography on sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition to that, the website works like a blog, with experts (judges, legal scholars, sociologists...) commenting on what is happening in the juridical field on LGBT-related issues. This way, the website is also a site for discussion and a network node of scholars, activists, and experts dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity. [Articolo29](#) also publishes an online bi-annual open access journal, titled *Genius*, 'juridical studies on sexual orientation and gender identity'.

Finally, a fourth category gathers civil society half-advocacy/half-observatory associations targeting individuals' rights, such as [Voxdiritti](#) and [A Buon Diritto](#). The first collects news, comments and information about a wide range of rights, from social rights, to health, labour and equality. The second association publishes every year (since 2014) a report on the status of rights in Italy, with the support of the Open Society Foundation and the Waldensians – and one chapter is specifically devoted to religious pluralism. This type of resource offers a mix of comments, analysis, updates, and state-of-the-art about individuals' rights. It is an interesting category which may be counted as an indirect effect of the mere existence of the European Union that, as a matter of fact, contributed to the development and spreading of a language of rights. In addition to the many resources, State-, universities- or associations-related, we can in fact say that, roughly speaking, the quasi-totality of civil society groups and associations is increasingly paying specific attention to the legal and judicial fields.