



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

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THIRD SECTION

Application no. 14235/25
Georgios MICHAÏL
against Greece
lodged on 8 May 2025
communicated on 13 July 2026

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE CASE

The application concerns the decision of the domestic courts to allow the mother of the applicant's child to christen their child in accordance with the Christian Orthodox Religion. The applicant argued before the domestic courts that the child should not be christened and should be allowed to choose his religion at a later stage. The domestic courts granted the mother's request on the grounds that the best interests of the child imposed his non-differentiation from other children, who follow a specific schedule at school, including morning prayer and going to the church during official school holidays, as Christian Orthodox is the dominant religion in Greece. If the matter was left pending, that could have caused consequences on the smooth development of the child, who was free to change religion when he would grow up. The applicant's appeal on points of law was rejected by decision no. 42/2025 of the Court of Cassation which was published on 13 January 2025.

The applicant complains under Article 2 of Protocol No. 1, taken alone and in conjunction with Article 9 of the Convention and Article 5 of Protocol No. 7, that the domestic courts did not respect his religious convictions and his right to educate his child in accordance with them. He further complains that they disregarded the duty of religious neutrality incumbent on the State authorities by considering that the child's best interests imposed his christening due to the dominant religion in Greece.

QUESTIONS TO THE PARTIES

1. Has there been a violation of Article 8, taken alone and read in light of Article 9 of the Convention, due to the domestic courts' decision to allow the christening of the applicant's child despite his wish to the contrary? Did the domestic courts sufficiently take into account the child's best interests in reaching their decision that the child should be christened, despite the parents' disagreement in this regard?

2. Do the applicant's views attain the "level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance" so as to fall within the scope of the guarantees embodied in Article 9 of the Convention (see, among other authorities, *İzzettin Doğan and Others v. Turkey* [GC], no. 62649/10, § 68, 26 April 2016)? In the affirmative, has there been a violation of Article 9, taken alone and in conjunction with Article 14 of the Convention, due to the domestic court's decisions which considered that the best interests of the child imposed his christening, because of the dominant religion in Greece?

3. Does the applicant have victim status as regards his complaint under Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention? In the affirmative, has there been a violation of that provision on account of the domestic courts' decision to allow the christening of the applicant's child, which would enable his participation in school activities that contain a religious character?