

Abstract: The withdrawal of the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe and its impact on the protection of human rights in the country

Key words: Council of Europe, Russia, Ukraine, aggression, human rights

The thesis focuses on the current topic of the Russian Federation's withdrawal from the Council of Europe and analyses what impact this move may have in relation to the protection of human rights in the country. In the introduction, the author introduces two research questions with the intention of examining them from an international law perspective. In the first one, the author shows her intention to reflect on whether the Russian Federation's withdrawal was a consequence of long-term complicated relations between the country and the Council of Europe or whether it was a direct reaction to the invasion of Ukraine. The second research question is related to the impact of the country's withdrawal from the organization on human rights in the country, more specifically whether the organisation still had the possibility to have an impact on the human rights situation in the country given the Russian Federation's attack on Ukraine in February 2022. The author considers both questions to be important in view of assessing the expediency and impact of Russia's expulsion from the Council of Europe.

The thesis is divided into three broad chapters, the first of which examines the protection of human rights in the Russian Federation from the perspective of domestic and international law in order to provide a broader context of the problem. The section on domestic law focuses particularly on the constitutional and institutional protection of human rights, while the international law section examines Russia's involvement in regional and universal human rights protection systems. This part also includes a section devoted to a critique of the human rights situation.

The second chapter focuses on the development of relations between the Council of Europe and Russia in the time span from the country's accession to the organization until the period before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with an emphasis on key milestones for the development of relations between the two entities, such as the Second Chechen War or Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. The author also analyses the controversial Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation's reservation of the possibility to decide on the enforceability of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

In the third chapter, the circumstances and legal aspects of the country's actual withdrawal from the organization are described and evaluated. Here, the author discusses the events of February

2022, the Council of Europe's response and the direction of future relations between the two entities, while also examining the organisation's potential in investigating and prosecuting war crimes committed during the conflict in Ukraine.