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## Countering SLAPPs: an imperative for a democratic society

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 2267 (2024)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2267 \(2024\)](#) “Countering SLAPPs: an imperative for a democratic society” and has forwarded it to the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) for information and possible comments.
2. The Committee of Ministers shares the Assembly’s concern over the steady increase in the number of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), referring to abusive litigation and legal tactics designed to prevent, hinder or sanction the dissemination of information on sensitive issues and contributions to public debate on matters of public interest.
3. With a view to taking decisive action in this regard, the Committee of Ministers is pleased to recall that it adopted Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2024\)2](#) to member States on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) on 5 April 2024, thus responding to the Assembly’s recommendation in paragraph 7.1. It expresses its gratitude for the constructive involvement of the Assembly’s rapporteur during the drafting process.
4. At its 133<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Session (Strasbourg, 17 May 2024), the Committee of Ministers reaffirmed the Council of Europe’s prominent role in international standard-setting on freedom of expression and related issues, and strongly encouraged member States to implement its Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2024\)2](#) on strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs).
5. The Committee recalls that the recommendation aims at fostering clarity on the characteristics and implications of SLAPPs on freedom of expression, public debate and public participation, while providing a wide range of structural and procedural safeguard mechanisms and remedies to counter SLAPPs that further strengthen existing legislative and policy frameworks and practices. It encourages member States to set up a wide range of measures to support targets and victims of SLAPPs; to address SLAPPs in educational, training and awareness raising programmes; to promote its goals through national co-ordination and international co-operation channels; and calls for a regular review of its implementation status to enhance its impact and to inform the Committee of Ministers about the measures taken, the progress achieved and any remaining shortcomings.
6. Referring to the Assembly’s recommendation in paragraph 7.2, the Committee informs the Assembly that the Second European anti-SLAPP Conference, co-organised by the Council of Europe, the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom and the CASE Coalition, held in Strasbourg on 14 November 2024, provided a first opportunity to exchange on the steps taken and plans at national level to implement the recommendation. Further efforts towards the promotion and training of relevant stakeholders at the domestic level are implemented as part of the Council of Europe assistance and co-operation work on freedom of expression.

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1. Adopted at the 1512<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (19 November 2024).



7. In addition to this most recent recommendation, the Committee of Ministers recalls a number of important instruments that it has adopted in the last years contributing to the countering SLAPPs and reinforcing the high importance it attaches to freedom of expression. These include Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)4](#) on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age; Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2018\)2](#) on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries; Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)4](#) on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors; and Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2014\)7](#) on the protection of whistleblowers.