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# Germany violated anti-abortion activist's human rights - ECHR

26 November 2015 | [Europe](#)



In recent years demonstrations by anti-abortion campaigners, above, have been met by counter-protests by pro-choice groups

**Germany was wrong to ban an anti-abortion activist from distributing leaflets near a clinic and naming doctors involved on his website, the European Court of Human Rights says.**

The court ruled that it violated the man's rights to freedom of expression.

Klaus Guenter Annen was ordered to stop handing out the leaflets and publishing the names of doctors in 2007.

The rise of US-style anti-abortion protests has caused controversy amid claims women feel harassed.

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In a short statement to the BBC after the European court's judgement, Mr Annen said the ruling was a "victory for freedom of expression for all of Europe".

### 'Morally degraded'

In his hand-outs, Mr Annen said doctors at a day clinic performed "unlawful abortions" - followed by an explanation, in smaller letters, making clear that the procedures were not technically illegal in Germany.

He referred to the Holocaust, saying: "The murder of human beings at Auschwitz was unlawful, but the morally degraded NS [Nazi] State allowed the murder of innocent people and did not make it subject to criminal liability."

The original injunction against Mr Annen, a conservative Christian, was granted at the request of doctors at the clinic.

But in its **ruling on Thursday**, the ECHR criticised the German courts for ordering him to stop distributing the leaflets and listing the names of the doctors on his website.

The court said Mr Annen's campaign "undoubtedly contributed to a highly controversial debate of public interest" and his rights to freedom of expression had been violated.

The court rejected his claim for damages but ordered Germany to pay him just under €13,700 (£9,640) towards costs and expenses.

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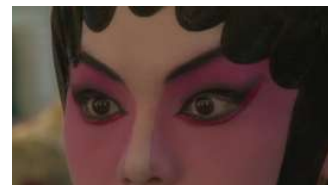
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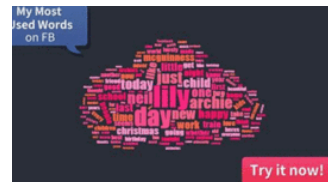
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