Guidelines for Annotating Argumentation Structures in Legal Cases

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Executive Summary

These are guidelines for annotation of arguments in sentences of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). This annotation is aimed to produce training examples for machine learning of automatic classifiers.

We annotate claims and premises, and support and attack relations between them. We provide definitions, tests and cues to identify them, together with examples.

Contents

1 Objectives of the annotation

The goal of this study is to create a language resource for argument mining by manually annotating the structure of arguments in legal cases from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) corpus[1]. Since argument annotation is a complex task, these guidelines include the definitions of argument components, argumentation structures and argumentative relations before describing the steps of the annotation in detail.

It is important to note that we are working with a substantial simplification of concepts. Argumentation is a very complex phenomenon involving many dimensions and factors. This initiative takes a very partial approach to the phenomenon, mainly aimed to produce a reliable corpus of examples for machine learning of argument mining and to produce applications that are useful for the legal practice.

The simplest form of an argument consists of one *claim* that is supported by at least one *premise* [7, 4]. The claim (or *conclusion*) is a controversial statement, expressed usually under the form of a proposition or assumption. The acceptance of the claim is subject to the presence of one or more premises (or *evidences*, or *facts*) that underpin the plausibility of the claim. A premise can therefore be seen as the justification of claim in the simplest form of arguments. In some cases, premises refute the claim they are referring to instead of supporting them. More complex arguments may include multiple claims, each supported or refuted by one or more premises, and even by other claims.

As an illustration, we provide the following example from [1]:

> **Example 1**
> given the claim:
> *Vaccination against Ebola is necessary.*
> the statement:
> *Ebola is a dangerous disease, there are high contamination risks,*
> is a premise in a relation of support to the claim, while:
> *The vaccine adjuvant is toxic, there is a limited number of cases and deaths compared to other diseases,*
> is a premise in a relation of attack to the claim.

We annotate two tasks simultaneously: argument component classification and argument component relation classification.

The task of argument component classification aims to identify argumentative fragments of text and classify them as *claims* or *premises*. These fragments are mostly intra-sentential but they may span multiple sentences as well.

Argument components are connected to each other by relations. As highlighted above, premises may be linked to the claim they refer to by *support* or *attack* relations [5]. The task of argument component relation classification aims to identify how the components relate to each other with a directed relation[2],

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[1]http://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw

[2]In a directed relation, the component where the relation is originated is distinguished from the component that the relation is directed to.

and classify this relation as support or attack.

The definition of the main concepts applied in the annotation is as follows:

Argument : in its simplest form, it includes one claim that is related to at least one premise with a support or attack relation. It may consist of several statements (premises, claim). More precisely, each argument includes the following argument components.

Argument Component :

   Claim : a controversial statement whose acceptance depends on premises that support or attack it. Claims are the central components of an argument. We associate each claim with the actor that has issued it.

   Premise : they are the reasons given by the author for supporting or attacking the claims. They are not controversial but factual. Specifically for this corpus, we distinguish the following subclasses of Premises: Facts, Principles of Law and Case-law.

Relations : we consider two main kinds of relations: **Support** and **Attack**. Claims support or attack other claims, premises may support or attack claims or other premises. Additionally, we have established two more minor relations, specific for this corpus: Duplicate (holding between claims or premises) and Citation (holding between premises, when one cites a reference Case-law). Relations may hold between components that are at any distance within the text: within a sentence, within a paragraph or in distant parts of the document.

dIn this document, the examples will be indented to the right and labeled with the format **claim** and <u>premise</u>. In case two components of the same kind are right next to each other, they will be separated with [ ].

The outline of the procedure is as follows:

1. Read the case and identify all the claims. The fact that a sentence is a claim is independent of the argument where it (may) be included.

2. Mark the relations between the claims. There may be "orphan" claims.

3. Mark the relevant premises that support or attack the identified claims.

2 Identification of Argument Components

2.1 Is this an Argument Component?

A span of text must be identified as an Argument Component if it states an opinion of the Court, the applicant, the Government or a Third Party[3], or if it

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[3]A Third Party Intervener is an actor in the current trial other than the ECHR, the applicant or the Government, and not an entity only referred in this case or the local courts. For example, it may be an association that is presenting a case before the ECHR together with the applicant, but as a separate legal person.

supports or attacks one such opinion. For example, in the following example, argument components are in italics.

Example 2
The Court observes that *the criminal proceedings in the applicant's case, in which she was charged with incitement, ended in a full acquittal on 4 November 2005.* The Court notes that the parties do not dispute the fact that *the termination of the applicant's employment was directly related to the events leading to the criminal proceedings.* The fact that *the labour court examined the criminal file and based its reasoning to a great extent on its contents* is sufficient to enable the Court to conclude that *a strong link between the criminal and labour proceedings existed.* As a result, *Article 6 § 2 is applicable in the context of the labour proceedings at issue.* The application is therefore not incompatible ratione materiae with the provisions of the Convention.

In some cases, components provide information that is redundant with what has already been stated, as in the following example, with the premise "*Everyone charged...*", that is only making explicit content that can be retrieved verbatim from the Article 6 § 2 of the Convention. However, from the point of view of argumentation, this explicitation serves the goal of supporting the claim, and must therefore be annotated.

Example 3
Being the master of the characterisation to be given in law to the facts of the case, the Court considers that **the applicant's grievances fall to be examined solely under Article 6 § 2 of the Convention** which reads as follows: "Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law."

When no explicit argument is provided in the text, we do not consider that the sentence is a component, as in the following example.

Example 4
The applicant has maintained her allegations.

2.2   Span and borders of Argument Components

Argument Components are spans of text of arbitrary length that convey a single full opinion. They may be part of a sentence or they may span multiple sentences, although the latter is unfrequent.

The borders or Argument Components are subject to much variation across annotators. To increase the consistency of annotators, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Punctuation at the beginning or at the end of an argument component is not included in the annotated component. For example, full stops at the end of sentences are not included.

- Conjunctions at the beginning or end of an argument component are not included, neither if they are subordinating nor coordinating. Conjunctions that have negative semantics are not included either, but their semantics should be dealt with in a hedging module.

- Reporting verbs or expressions are not part of the component, as in "The Court notes that", "the fact that".

In some cases, the scope of a reporting verb is unclear, because the semantics of a reporting verb can be expressed through a multiword expression. In these cases, it is useful to apply the test of substituting the candidate multiword expression by a well-known reporting verb. In the following example:

Example 5
[...] the Court sees no reason <u>to hold otherwise</u>.

The multiword expression "*sees no reason*" can be substituted by the verb "*rejects*", thus those words need to be kept out of the component.

We have observed that some components, like principles stated in laws, may cross sentence boundaries. We decide to respect this scenario with our annotation, but we do not allow components to span on different paragraphs. However, this applies to components only, as relations may hold between components that are in different paragraphs.

There are cases where the components have irrelevant text in the middle. The annotation can involve separated chunks of text only to avoid malformed phrases. However, breaking the component span should be avoided whenever is possible. It should not be used for co-reference resolution.

The borders of citations are particularly prone to variation between annotators. For instance, in the following example:

Example 6
... <u>the presumption of innocence imposes requirements in respect of, inter alia, the burden of proof, legal presumptions of fact and law, the privilege against self-incrimination, pre-trial publicity and premature expressions, by the trial court or by other public officials, of a defendant's guilt</u> (see <u>Allen v. the United Kingdom [GC], no. 25424/09, § 93, ECHR 2013 and the cases cited therein for a summary of the case-law</u>)

The borders for the citation premise may be considered very differently between annotators: some may include "*see*", others exclude "*for a summary of the case-law*", others exclude even "*and the cases cited therein*". When there is no clear distinction on the borders of a component, we try to use the borders of sentences or textual elements as the borders of the component, in this case,

the parentheses. For citations, "*see*" is always excluded, because it works as a subordinating conjunction, and these are always out of the scope of components, but dominating them.

Some annotators also tend to include modifiers as part of the component, but they should be excluded, as in the following example:

> **Example 7**
> However, *in all cases and regardless of which approach applied,* <u>the language used by a decision maker would be of critical importance in assessing the compatibility of the decision and its reasoning with Article 6 § 2</u> (ibid., §§ 125 and 126).

The actor uttering a claim is not a part of that claim. However, some premises describe an event where someone is uttering a claim: if they are considered as premises, then the whole event must be included in the component, including the actor uttering some statement, as in the following two examples:

> **Example 8**
> In Allen (ibid., § 125), *the Grand Chamber noted that* <u>there was no single approach to ascertaining the circumstances in which the second aspect of Article 6 § 2 would be violated in the context of proceedings following the conclusion of criminal proceedings</u>.

> **Example 9**
> In their submissions, the Government maintained that the applicant's dismissal at the material time had been based on the self-incriminating statements she had given to the police. Although she had retracted her statements at a later date and denied having committed the alleged offense, *the labour court had established that* <u>the acts of the applicant had breached her employer's trust and therefore justified her dismissal from her post</u>.

3 Classification of Argument Components

We distinguish two kinds of Argument Components: claims and premises.

3.1 Claims

Claims represent a standpoint on the topic. They are opinionated statements, that some of the parties involved assert to be true or false. Usually the verb is in present tense. We are annotating all claims, irrespective of the fact that they are supported or attacked by a premise.

> **Example 10**
> In their submissions, the Government maintained that **the applicant's dismissal at the material time had been based on the self-incriminating statements she had given to the police**.

Judgments involve actors that develop different argumentations each. These actors are mostly limited to the litigants (the *applicant* and the *government*) and the court itself (ECHR), but sometimes third party interveners are also present. We label the argument components with an attribute that specifies the source of the component, as in Ashley and Walker [2].

Main verbs of communication, such as *conclude, allege, finds*, or *decide* have a higher chance of being the main verb of a claim.

> **Example 11**
> The applicant alleged that, despite her acquittal by a criminal court, **the labour court's subsequent judgment, and in particular the pronouncement of her guilt therein, had breached her right to be presumed innocent within the meaning of Article 6 § 2 of the Convention**.

In the previous example, the component "*her acquittal by a criminal court*" is a premise attacking the claim.

Communication verbs may include the relation between the actor and the claim, that may be negative, as in the case of *challenge* or *complain* in the examples below.

> **Example 12**
> The Government also *challenged* **the applicant's argument that the labour court had mentioned or had regard to her guilt under criminal law**.

> **Example 13**
> The applicant also *complained* **about the language used by Palma de Mallorca investigating judge no. 9...**

> **Example 14**
> In the light of the foregoing factors, the Court *is not satisfied that* **the investigations carried out in the present case were sufficiently thorough and effective to satisfy the aforementioned requirements of Article 3**.

This piece of semantics is highly valuable to represent the propositional and argumentative content of the argument component, but the verb carrying this information is still **not** included as part of the argument component. We expect that procedures making inferences from these annotations will be able to exploit features of the context of argument components to include this kind of information as part of the semantics of the component.

Modal verbs indicating unreality are also strong indicators that the sentence may be a claim, even if the actor is not specified in the text.

> **Example 15**
> **Any statement or reasoning by a civil court calling into question the applicant's established innocence would be incompatible with the requirements of Article 6 § 2.**

3.2 Premises

Premises are reasons advanced for or against some statement (i.e., claim or premise), and they provide facts or assertions that some actor puts forward as true, i.e., the conclusion is true. They are pieces of reasoning supporting or attacking a claim in the argument. A sentence is annotated as a premise only if it is linked to a claim. Premises that are not linked are left unannotated.

> **Example 16**
> Relying on Article 6 of the Convention, the applicant complains that the labour court's dismissal of her claim for compensation against her former employer amounted to a violation of her right to be presumed innocent, in that <u>the labour court found that she had broken her employer's trust by committing the offence of incitement</u>.

> **Example 17**
> The applicant alleged that, despite <u>her acquittal by a criminal court</u>, the labour court's subsequent judgment, and in particular the pronouncement of her guilt therein, had breached her right to be presumed innocent within the meaning of Article 6 § 2 of the Convention.

We distinguish four subtypes of premises that are relevant in the domain of judgments: *Facts*, *Case Law*, *Rights principles and Law* and *Others*.
As a rule of thumb, if the actor of a statement is not explicitly stated, this is a strong indicator that the statement is a premise, not a claim. Claims tend to be clearly issued by someone, while premises are stand-alone truths. However, premises can also be explicitly stated by an actor, if they are indisputable facts or principles, as in the following examples:

> **Example 18**
> The Court observes that <u>the criminal proceedings in the applicant's case, in which she was charged with incitement, ended in a full acquittal on 4 November 2005</u>.

> **Example 19**
> The Court notes that the parties do not dispute the fact that <u>the termination of the applicant's employment was directly related to the events leading to the criminal proceedings</u>.

In these cases, they may be introduced by structures very similar to those of the claims, namely with a communication verb and one of the actors uttering claims in the judgments, but the content of the statement is not an opinionated claim but a fact that is in a support or attack relation with a claim.

3.2.1 Types of premises

Analyzing the judgments, we found three different types of premises, having specific features in the argumentation.

Facts : they are objective reporting of past facts (referred to as *data* in Toulmin's model [7]). Usually the verb is in past tense.

> **Example 20**
> The fact that the labour court examined the criminal file and based its reasoning to a great extent on its contents is sufficient to enable the Court to conclude that a strong link between the criminal and labour proceedings existed.

Rights, principles and law : they are statements based on existing law, codes, or relying on specific jurisdictions.

> **Example 21**
> However, in order to comply with the right guaranteed under Article 6 § 2 of the Convention, the national courts in the subsequent proceedings need to stay within the bounds of a civil forum and refrain from suggesting criminal characterization of the applicant's conduct

Case Law : they are descriptions of previous cases or some aspect of them, and also mentions and citations to previous cases.

> **Example 22**
> In Allen (ibid., § 125), the Grand Chamber noted that there was no single approach to ascertaining the circumstances in which the second aspect of Article 6 § 2 would be violated in the context of proceedings following the conclusion of criminal proceedings.

Other : Premises that do not fall in any of the other categories.

> **Example 23**
> The Court further notes that the labour court in its judgment referred to the fact that the applicant's employer had relied on the fact that the applicant had confessed to inciting M.G. into committing the crime, and that the labour court explicitly stated that it had examined the entire criminal investigation file (see paragraph 14 above).

Case Law premises that are citations have very variable forms. We annotate them as uniformly as possible, excluding "see" or any other word functioning as the subordinating nexus between the case law and the statement it is supporting. For example:

> **Example 24**
> [...] pre-trial publicity and premature expressions, by the trial court or by other public officials, of a defendant's guilt (see Allen v. the United Kingdom [GC], no. 25424/09, § 93, ECHR 2013 and the cases cited therein for a summary of the case-law).

Example 25
[...] or to comment on the subsisting indications of the applicant's possible guilt. (see <u>Allen, cited above, § 104</u>).

Example 26
See, mutatis mutandis, <u>Frendo Randon and Others v. Malta, no. 2226/10, § 55, 22 November 2011</u>.

In some cases, the conclusions of a previous trial are reported and used as facts in the current argumentation. As we decided that only the actors involved in the judgment can emit claims, and the judgments of previous cases are taken as facts in present ones, reported speech is annotated as a premise of the argument in the present case, as shown in Example 27.

Example 27
In their submissions, the Government maintained that **the applicant's dismissal at the material time had been based on the self-incriminating statements she had given to the police**. Although <u>she had retracted her statements at a later date and denied having committed the alleged offence</u>], [<u>the labour court had established that the acts of the applicant had breached her employer's trust and therefore justified her dismissal from her post</u>

3.2.2 Distinction between claims and premises

In some cases, it is difficult to distinguish whether a component is a claim or a premise, because the ECHR is able to make performative speech acts [3] that create legal realities. Thus what is said by the ECHR becomes law and therefore it becomes a fact.In other words, the claims of the ECHR become premises (of the subtype "Case Law" or "Principle") after they have been issued, even if the European juridical system is not strongly based on case law. However, in the moment that they are uttered, they are uttered as claims, with an argumentative structure to support them. The most borderline case for claim-premise confusion is when the Court is referring to something that was claimed before in the text of the same judgement, argumentatively using it as a premise, but which has ontologically not the status of a fact or case-law.

For instance, in the following example it is unclear whether the Court is describing the degree of potentiality of a risk (a premise) or whether it is issuing a claim on what happens when the respect for acquittal is not ensured (a claim). The use of the modal verb "could" in this example is ambiguous, and the context does not disambiguate it. In this example, different persons may interpret different things. Even the same person may interpret different things in different occasions. This is an ambiguous sentence, and classifying it as a claim or a premise is an unnatural task.

Example 28
Without protection to ensure respect for the acquittal or the discon-

tinuation decision in any other proceedings, the fair trial guarantees of Article 6 § 2 could risk becoming theoretical and illusory.

When the ECHR is describing a principle or law, this must be considered as a premise of the class "Principle", as in the examples below.

Example 29
Viewed as a procedural guarantee in the context of a criminal trial itself, the presumption of innocence imposes requirements in respect of, inter alia , the burden of proof, legal presumptions of fact and law, the privilege against self-incrimination, pre-trial publicity and premature expressions, by the trial court or by other public officials, of a defendant's guilt (see Allen v. the United Kingdom [GC], no. 25424/09, § 93, ECHR 2013 and the cases cited therein for a summary of the case-law).

It is arguably possible that the description is biased, and in that case it should not be considered as a description but more of an opinionated statement. However, we are not considering this case, but assuming that the Court is impartial. It is true that the Court interprets the law, thus the description is not formally implied by the propositional content of the law, but it can be assumed that any impartial Court would have produced the same interpretation for the same case. This is the case when the Court develops on the spirit of a given law, as in the following example:

Example 30
Its general aim, in this second aspect, is to protect individuals who have been acquitted of a criminal charge, or in respect of whom criminal proceedings have been discontinued, from being treated by public officials and authorities as though they are in fact guilty of the offence charged

4 Argumentative Relations

Relations hold between argument components to build the structure of the argument. The paradigmatic relation holds from a premise to a claim, either supporting or attacking it, as in Example 1. However, a claim may be supported or attacked by another claim, which will be in turn supported or attacked by some argumentative structure. Any argumentative structure must be ultimately based on premises, but the intermediate structure may contain claims or premises.

In the following example we can see that the first claim is supported by the second and third claims, as can be seen graphically in Figure 1.

Example 31
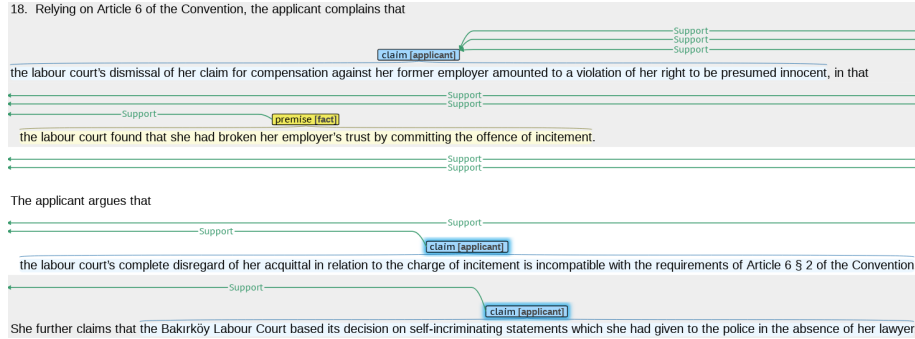Relying on Article 6 of the Convention, the applicant complains that

Figure 1: An example of two claims supporting another claim.

> **the labour court's dismissal of her claim for compensation against her former employer amounted to a violation of her right to be presumed innocent**, in that the labour court found that she had broken her employer's trust by committing the offence of incitement. The applicant argues that **the labour court's complete disregard of her acquittal in relation to the charge of incitement is incompatible with the requirements of Article 6 § 2 of the Convention**. She further claims that **the Bakırköy Labour Court based its decision on self-incriminating statements which she had given to the police in the absence of her lawyer**.

We consider different types of relations between argument components, depending on the type of the components. More precisely, between claims and premises there are three possible relations: *support*, *attack*, and *duplicate*.

We add a special relation called *citation* between two premise to capture textual citations in the judgments, like the mention of a case. A summary of the argument component relations is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of argument component relations.

	to premise	to claim
from premise	attack, support, duplicate, citation	attack, support
from claim		attack, support, duplicate

4.1 Attack

An attack relation between two argument components indicates that the source component is a refutation or a rebuttal of the target component. Let us consider the following example, where the claim "the applicant's dismissal at the material

time had been based on the self-incriminating statements she had given to the police" is attacked by the premise "she had retracted her statements at a later date and denied having committed the alleged offence" whilst the other premise is supporting the claim.

> **Example 32**
> In their submissions, the Government maintained that **the applicant's dismissal at the material time had been based on the self-incriminating statements she had given to the police**. Although she had retracted her statements at a later date and denied having committed the alleged offence, the labour court had established that the acts of the applicant had breached her employer's trust and therefore justified her dismissal from her post.

4.2 Support

A support relation between two argument components indicates that the source component is a reason or a justification of the target component. Let us consider the following example, where the three premises highlighted in the text support the claim "the statements given by the applicant to the police without the assistance of a lawyer were relied on by the labour court".

> **Example 33**
> The Court notes in this context that it has already found that the use as evidence for a criminal conviction of statements given by the accused to the police without the assistance of a lawyer may amount to a violation of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention (see Salduz v. Turkey [GC], no. 36391/02, §§ 56-62, ECHR 2008). The Government have not commented on the applicant's claim that her statements to the police were used as evidence in the civil case. The Court further notes that the labour court in its judgment referred to the fact that the applicant's employer had relied on the fact that the applicant had confessed to inciting M.G. into committing the crime, and that the labour court explicitly stated that it had examined the entire criminal investigation file (see paragraph 14 above). Thus, the facts of the case seem to indicate that **the statements given by the applicant to the police without the assistance of a lawyer were relied on by the labour court**, and the Court does not rule out that reliance by a court on such statements in civil proceedings may raise an issue under Article 6 § 1 of the Convention

4.3 Duplicate

Claims are often rephrased or explained more in detail during the argumentation of the judgment. In these cases, we cannot assess a precedence of one claim over the other in the argument, so we choose to label both and mark them as

duplicates with an explicit relation, as it holds for the two claims identified in Example 34.

> **Example 34**
> Relying on Article 6 of the Convention, the applicant complains that **the labour court's dismissal of her claim for compensation against her former employer amounted to a violation of her right to be presumed innocent**, in that the labour court found that she had broken her employer's trust by committing the offence of incitement. The applicant argues that **the labour court's complete disregard of her acquittal in relation to the charge of incitement is incompatible with the requirements of Article 6 § 2 of the Convention**.

The same holds for premises.

4.4   Citation

References to previous cases should be annotated as a different premise with respect to their conclusion, if this is present. The full span of the case citation should be labeled, as shown in Example 35, where "Allen v. the United Kingdom [GC], no. 25424/09, § 93, ECHR 2013 and the cases cited therein for a summary of the case-law" is the citation linked to the premise "the presumption of innocence imposes requirements in respect of, inter alia, the burden of proof, legal presumptions of fact and law, the privilege against self-incrimination, pre-trial publicity and premature expressions, by the trial court or by other public officials, of a defendant's guilt".

Citation can be considered as a subkind of Support. However, we distinguish it because it is very useful for information retrieval in this domain. Moreover, it is a very clear concept for annotators to annotate, with virtually no disagreement between annotators.

> **Example 35**
> the presumption of innocence imposes requirements in respect of, inter alia, the burden of proof, legal presumptions of fact and law, the privilege against self-incrimination, pre-trial publicity and premature expressions, by the trial court or by other public officials, of a defendant's guilt (see Allen v. the United Kingdom [GC], no. 25424/09, § 93, ECHR 2013 and the cases cited therein for a summary of the case-law)

> **Example 36**
> The second aspect of the protection afforded by Article 6 § 2 requires that a person must be treated in a manner that is consistent with his or her innocence after the conclusion of criminal proceedings which have terminated in an acquittal or discontinuation (ibid., § 103).

If more than one case is cited in the same sentence, they should be labeled separately. Citations also work for citations to other parts of the document itself, not only case-law, as in the following example:

> **Example 37**
> The Court further notes that the labour court in its judgment referred to the fact that the applicant's employer had relied on the fact that the applicant had confessed to inciting M.G. into committing the crime, and that the labour court explicitly stated that it had examined the entire criminal investigation file (see paragraph 14 above).

4.5   Disconnected components

Not all argumentative statements are included in an argument. If a statement does not support any claim, then we do not consider it as a premise. However, a statement that is a claim must be labeled, even if it is not related to any other claim, i.e., even if it does not play the role of premise for another claim in the document.

> **Example 38**
> The Court firstly notes that the rules setting out the grant of leave for the use of one of the official languages of the Contracting Parties during proceedings are Rules 34 § 3 and 36 § 5(b) respectively. In the instant case, on 23 May 2014 the President of the Chamber gave leave to the applicant's representative to use Turkish in his correspondence.
>
> Secondly, the Court considers that it cannot speculate as to what the outcome of the proceedings would have been had the Bakırköy Labour Court not disregarded the applicant's right to the presumption of innocence. It therefore considers that **no award can be made in respect of the applicant's claim for pecuniary damages**.

5   Controversial Examples

Some cases are difficult to identify as Argument Components, for example:

> **Example 39**
> However, having regard to the fact that the labour court's reasoning and the wording used violated the applicant's right to presumption of innocence, **the Court does not find it necessary to also assess if the labour court in reaching its conclusion relied on evidence in violation of the right to a fair trial**.

The purported claim is not part of an argument that leads to one of the major conclusions of the judgment, so annotators disagree on considering it as a claim.

However, it has indicators that this is a claim, namely a verbal construction of opinion (*does not find it necessary*).

In the following example, it is unclear whether the Court is making a claim about how a principle should be interpreted (Claim) or a description of a case (Premise - Case Law) or describing a principle (Premise - Principle). Annotators cannot reach an agreement, the example is ambiguous.

> **Example 40**
> However, in all cases and regardless of which approach applied, <u>the language used by a decision maker would be of critical importance in assessing the compatibility of the decision and its reasoning with Article 6 § 2</u> (ibid., §§ 125 and 126).

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A   Annotation Procedure

As the documents reporting the cases submitted to the European Court of Human Rights are particularly long and involve multiple arguments, we recommend to follow these steps to obtain an optimal annotation:

1. Read the case and identify all the claims. The fact that a sentence is a claim is independent of the argument where it (may) be included.

2. Mark the relations between the claims. There may be "orphan" claims.

3. Mark the relevant premises that support or attack the identified claims.

As an annotation tool we are using Brat [6].