

## **A Right to Freedom of Action?**

The Human Rights Act has strengthened the protection of the individual from state interference with specified rights and interests but the Act does not defend liberty itself. Whilst human rights techniques are a very useful tool in protecting particular rights or freedoms they are of little use in challenging restrictions on liberty which do not engage the specifically protected rights. As a result human rights principles have little to offer diverse debates such as voluntary euthanasia, the legalisation of the use of cannabis or any ban on hunting with dogs, which restrict the freedom of the individual but do not obviously raise right protected under the Human Rights Act. The article suggests that the European Convention on Human Rights should be amended to add a right to freedom of action to protect Mill's concept of liberty. However is the philosophy of the Human Rights Act – that the state and particularly the courts have a duty to protect this right – in fundamental conflict with the belief that liberties are best left to the individual?

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