



# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Following the 60th anniversary celebrated by the Council of Europe in 2009, “Herald of Europe” publishes this section on diverse activities of the Council of Europe.



## WHO WE ARE

**Human Rights... Democracy... Rule of Law**

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg (France), now covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries. Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.



## OUR OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of the Council of Europe is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the whole of the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These values are the foundations of a tolerant and civilised society and indispensable for European stability, economic growth and social cohesion. On the basis of these fundamental values, we try to find shared solutions to major problems such as terrorism, organised crime and corruption, cybercrime, bioethics and cloning, violence against children and women, and trafficking in human beings. Co-operation between all member states is the only way to solve the major problems facing society today.

## OBJECTIVES:

- to protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- to promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- to find common solutions to the challenges facing European society;
- to consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform

## VIEWPOINTS:

THOMAS HAMMARBERG,  
Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

### Each child in need should grow up in a safe and stable environment



[28/12/09 10:00] "The process of de-institutionalisation of large-scale institutions for orphans and children with disabilities must continue, but it has to be pursued with care in the best interests of the child", declared Commissioner Hammarberg in his latest Viewpoint. Stating that suitable alternatives must be developed and supported by the authorities – also in a period of economic crisis he calls governments to enhance the process of supporting children at risk with a strong political backing and sufficient budget resources. Analysing the existing gaps, he considers that public policies should combine step-by-step closure of the old residential care institutions, determined efforts to support vulnerable families and creation of support services such as foster families. "We know now what to do to protect children in need. What is needed is the political will to turn appropriate programmes into reality", he concluded.

\*Drawing given by a child, Home Rainbow for children with mental disabilities, Sofia.

### Commissioner Hammarberg: Andrei Sakharov still an inspiration for human rights activists



[14/12/09 10:00] "The example and thoughts of Andrei Sakharov remain acutely relevant," said Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, in his Viewpoint published December 14, 2009, twenty years after Andrei Sakharov's death on December 14, 1989. "Sakharov presented a universal vision for a peaceful and progressive society based on human rights standards." Commissioner Hammarberg took part in the conference 'Andrei Sakharov's Ideas Today' in Moscow on 14-15 December. The conference was arranged by the Andrei Sakharov Museum and Public Center with the support of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Information Office of the Council of Europe in Moscow. A video on Andrei Sakharov has also been released for this occasion.

### "Europe should embrace multiculturalism and avoid narrow definitions of national identities" says Commissioner Hammarberg



[30/11/09 10:00] "Europe is still not free from racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Minorities are made targets of hate speech, violence and systematic discrimination, not least in the job market", said Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. He asked politicians to take such negative tendencies more seriously. "There is a need to analyse and address the very root causes of these human and political failures. Our ability to interact positively with one another will affect the future of Europe."

**“UN Child Rights treaty 20 years: Implementation still not satisfactory”  
says Commissioner Hammarberg**



[16/11/09 11:00] “The 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be a moment of reflection: many children still suffer grave violations. Their concerns are seldom given top priority in politics” said Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. “The Convention on the Rights of the Child has become one of the most well-known and broadly supported international human rights treaties. Yet, its actual implementation has been less effective than we anticipated, mainly because of the absence of a systematic, comprehensive approach to children’s rights as a political priority.”

**“Climate change is also a human rights concern”  
says Commissioner Hammarberg**



[19/10/09 09:30] “The daily lives of millions of people are already being affected by the natural effects of global warming. Basic human rights - such as the right to life, health, food, water, shelter or property - are also threatened” said Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. Calling for a spirit of global solidarity and the recognition of interdependence among countries, the Commissioner stresses the need to develop a stronger focus on the relationship between climate change and human rights.

**“The death penalty is a fallacious idea of justice”  
says Commissioner Hammarberg**



[05/10/09 09:30] “Europe is today close to being a death penalty free zone. However, more must be done not only to abolish it, but also to persuade public opinion of the need to protect the right to life in any circumstances” said Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, in his latest Viewpoint published today. “Our position on the death penalty indicates the kind of society we want to build. When the State itself kills a human being under its jurisdiction, it sends a message that legitimises extreme violence. The death penalty has a brutalising effect in society.”

**“Persons with mental disabilities should not be deprived of their human rights”  
says Commissioner Hammarberg**



[21/09/09 09:30] “Individuals with mental health or intellectual disabilities have been treated as non-persons whose decisions are meaningless, even in recent years. They have been deprived of basic human rights” said Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. “Their mere existence has been seen as a problem and they have sometimes been hidden away in remote institutions or in the backrooms of family homes. Though much of this has changed with the progress of the human rights cause,

persons with mental health or intellectual disabilities do still face problems relating to their right to take decisions for themselves, also in important matters. Their legal capacity is restricted or deprived completely, and they are placed under the guardianship of someone else who is entitled to take all decisions on their behalf.”



## HOW WE WORK?

### **The Committee of Ministers**

This is the Council's decision-making body and is made up of the ministers of foreign affairs of each member state or their permanent diplomatic representatives in Strasbourg. The Committee of Ministers decides Council of Europe policy and approves its budget and programme of activities.

### **The Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)**

This is the deliberative body and the driving force of the Council of Europe. The Assembly has initiated many international treaties, helping to create a Europe-wide system of legislation. Its members are appointed by the national parliaments of each member state.

### **The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

The Congress is the voice of Europe's 200 000 regions and municipalities and provides a forum where elected representatives can discuss common problems, pool their experiences and develop policies. It works to strengthen democracy and improve services at local and regional level.

### **The European Court of Human Rights**

This is the permanent judicial body which guarantees for all Europeans the rights safeguarded by the European Convention on Human Rights. It is open to states and individuals regardless of nationality. The 47 member states of the Council of Europe are parties to the Convention.

### **Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Commissioner is an independent body responsible for promoting education, awareness and respect for human rights in member states. The Commissioner plays an essentially preventive role.

### **The Conference of INGOs**

The Conference includes some 400 international Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs). It provides vital links between politicians and the public and brings the voice of civil society to the Council. The Council's work benefits extensively from the INGOs' expertise and their outreach to European citizens.

### **The Secretary General**

The Secretary General is elected by the Parliamentary Assembly for a five-year term at the head of the Organisation. He is responsible for the strategic planning and direction of the Council's work programme and budget and oversees the day-to-day management of the Organisation.



### **The Deputy Secretary General**

The Deputy Secretary General is also elected for a five-year term by the Parliamentary Assembly, in an election separate to the one held for the Secretary General.

### **The Secretariat**

Coming from all 47 member states, over 2,000 permanent staff work mainly in Strasbourg, France, but also in other offices throughout Europe, joined by temporary employees.

### **Budget**

In 2010: 218 000 000 €

### **Official languages**

English and French are the Council of Europe's two official languages. German, Italian and Russian are also working languages. Various documents are also published in other European languages.



**THE EUROPEAN FLAG**

«Against the background of blue sky, the stars form a circle, symbolising union. The number of stars is fixed, twelve being the symbol of perfection and completeness and bringing to mind the apostles, the sons of Jacob, the labours of Hercules, the months in the year, etc.»

From its foundation in 1949 the Council of Europe was aware of the need to give Europe a symbol with which its inhabitants could identify. On 25 October 1955 the Parliamentary Assembly unanimously approved the emblem of a circle of gold stars on a blue background. On 9 December 1955 the organisation's Committee of Ministers adopted the star-studded flag, which was launched officially on 13 December of the same year in Paris.

### **A symbol for the whole of Europe**

In 1983 the European Parliament in turn adopted the flag devised by the Council of Europe and recommended that it become the European Communities' emblem. The European Council gave its approval in June 1985. The European Union's institutions began to use the flag in 1986.

The European flag has since become synonymous with a shared political project which unites all Europeans, transcending their diversity.



## LEADERS:



**ANTONIO MIŠOSKI**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of “the former Yugoslav Republic  
of Macedonia” and Chairman  
of the Committee of Ministers  
of the Council of Europe



**YAVUZ MILDON**  
President of the Council of Europe  
Congress of Local and Regional  
Authorities



**MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU**  
President of the Council of Europe  
Parliamentary Assembly



**THOMAS HAMMARBERG**  
Council of Europe Commissioner  
for Human Rights



**THORBJØRN JAGLAND**  
Council of Europe Secretary General



**JEAN-MARIE HEYDT**  
President of the Conference  
of International Non-Governmental  
Organisations (INGO)



**MAUD DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO**  
Council of Europe Deputy Secretary  
General



**MATEO SORINAS**  
Secretary General of the Council  
of Europe Parliamentary Assembly



**JEAN-PAUL COSTA**  
President of the European Court  
of Human Rights



**ANDREAS KIEFER**  
Secretary General of the Council  
of Europe Congress of Local and  
Regional Authorities



## THORBJØRN JAGLAND ELECTED SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

STRASBOURG, 29.09.2009 - The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) elected Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway) Secretary General of the Organisation for a five-year term.

In the first round of the election, Thorbjørn Jagland obtained 165 votes (an absolute majority) and Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (Poland) 80 votes. There were 245 votes cast.

Mr Jagland has been President of the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) since 2005 and Member of Parliament for Buskerud County since 1993.

He was born on 5 November 1950 in Drammen, Norway. He is married to Hanne Grotjord. They have two children. Thorbjørn Jagland was sworn in as Secretary General on 1 October 2009.

### Thorbjørn Jagland Biography

Mr Thorbjørn Jagland is Secretary General of the Council of Europe since 1 October 2009. He was the President of the Storting (Norwegian Parliament) from 2005 to 2009. He was elected Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which awards the Nobel Peace Prize every year. He has held two of the most influential governmental positions in Norway: Prime Minister (1996-97) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2000-2001). After serving as Foreign Minister, he was Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and the enlarged Foreign Affairs Committee in the Storting for four years (2001-2005). He also served as Chairman of the EEA Consultative Committee during this period (2000-2005). In addition, he has held a number of other parliamentary positions, such as head of the Storting's Delegation for Relations with the European Parliament for six years. He was a member of the Storting for 15 years. Mr Jagland was Leader of the Norwegian Labour Party for ten years (1992-2002), and Party Secretary of the Labour Party for five years (1987-1992). He is currently the Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Oslo centre for Peace and Human Rights, and Member of the International Board of Governors at the Peres Center for Peace. He served as Vice-President of the Socialist International 1999-2008, and Chair of the Social International Middle East Committee from 2000 to 2006. He was a member of the Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-finding Commission (The Mitchell Commission) from 2000 to 2001. Over the last 20 years, Mr Jagland has published widely on a range of issues, in particular on European and international affairs. He has published four books in Norway: *My European Dream* (1990), *Letters* (1995), *Our Vulnerable World* (2001) and *Ten Theses on the EU and Norway* (2003). He holds a degree in Economics from the University of Oslo (1975).

## 2010 — THE YEAR IN BRIEF

(This list is not exhaustive)

■ 30th anniversary of the Pompidou Group ■ 20th anniversary of the North South Centre

### JANUARY

11-12, Athens (Greece)  
..... International Conference on Roma Women  
25-29, Strasbourg  
..... Parliamentary Assembly First Part Session  
27 ..... International Holocaust Remembrance Day  
28 ..... Data Protection Day

### FEBRUARY

10 ..... 15th anniversary of the accession of Latvia  
..... to the Council of Europe  
18-19, Interlaken  
(Switzerland)  
..... Ministerial Conference on the future  
..... of the European Court of Human Rights

## MARCH

- 7 ..... 60th anniversary of the accession of Iceland  
..... to the Council of Europe
- 8 ..... International Women's Day
- 11–13, Venice (Italy)  
..... Venice Commission 82nd Plenary Session
- 12, Paris ..... Parliamentary Assembly Standing  
..... Committee
- 17–19, Strasbourg  
..... 18th Plenary Session of the Congress  
..... of Local and Regional Authorities
- 21 ..... International Day of Eradication of Racial  
..... Discrimination
- 23, Strasbourg  
..... Conference on judicial training
- 23–25, Strasbourg  
..... Octopus Interface conference on Coopera-  
..... tion against cybercrime

## APRIL

- 7 ..... World Health Day
- 8 ..... International Roma Day
- 13 ..... 60th anniversary of the accession of Turkey  
..... to the Council of Europe
- 12–19, Salvador (Brasil)  
..... Council of Europe participation in the 12th  
..... UN Congress on Crime Prevention and  
..... Criminal Justice
- 15–16, Basel (Switzerland)  
..... Symposium on the Convention on Counter-  
..... feit medicines
- 18, Istanbul (Turkey)  
..... FACE human rights film award
- 26–28, Strasbourg  
..... Session of the Conference of INGOs
- 26–30, Strasbourg  
..... Parliamentary Assembly Second Part Session
- 29 ..... 45th anniversary of the accession of Malta  
..... to the Council of Europe
- 29–30, Madrid (Spain)  
..... European Dialogue on Internet Governance  
..... (EURODIG)

## MAY

- 3 ..... World Day on freedom of the press
- 3, Lisbon (Portugal)  
..... North South Prize and Round table on inter-  
..... dependance and global solidarity
- 3–4, St. Gallen (Switzerland)  
..... Conference on "Democracy and Decentra-  
..... lisation"

- 5 ..... 61th anniversary of the Council of Europe
- 11 ..... Committee of Ministers' session: "The former  
..... Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" takes  
..... over chairmanship from Switzerland
- 17 ..... International Day against Homophob<sup>21</sup>, Skopje  
..... ("The former Yugoslav Republic of Mace-  
..... donia")  
..... Parliamentary Assembly Standing Com-  
..... mittee
- 24–25, Baku (Azerbaijan)  
..... 7th Council of Europe Conference of Minis-  
..... ters responsible for equality between  
..... women and men

## JUNE

- 4–5, Venice (Italy)  
..... Venice Commission 83rd Plenary Session  
..... and celebration of the 20th anniversary of  
..... the Venice Commission
- 4–5, Brdo (Slovenia)  
..... 23rd Session of the Council of Europe  
..... Standing Conference of Ministers  
..... of Education
- 5 ..... World Environment Day
- 10–12, Limassol (Cyprus)  
..... European Conference of Presidents of  
..... Parliaments
- 14 ..... World Blood Donation Day
- 20 ..... World Refugees Day
- 21–23, Strasbourg  
..... Session of the Conference of INGOs
- 21–25, Strasbourg  
..... Parliamentary Assembly Third Part Session
- 22–23, London (the United Kingdom)  
..... 7th conference of the Electoral Manage-  
..... ment Bodies on "Putting the voter first at  
..... elections", organised by the Venice Com-  
..... mission and the Electoral Commission of the  
..... United Kingdom
- 26 ..... International Day against Drug Abuse and  
..... Illicit Trafficking
- 26 ..... International Day in Support of Victims  
..... of torture

## JULY

- Strasbourg  
..... V Summer University for Democracy
- 8–9, Moscow (Russia)  
..... 15th Session of the Council of Europe  
..... Conference of Ministers responsible for  
..... Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) —

..... “Challenges of the Future: Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent in a Changing World”  
 13 ..... 60th anniversary of the accession of Germany to the Council of Europe  
 ..... 15th anniversary of the accession of Moldova to the Council of Europe  
 ..... 15th anniversary of the accession of Albania to the Council of Europe

**AUGUST**

12 ..... International Youth Day

**SEPTEMBER**

14–17, Vilnius (Lithuania)  
 ..... Internet Governance Forum  
 21 ..... International Peace Day  
 22, Baku (Azerbaijan)  
 ..... 18th Council of Europe Informal Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport  
 26 ..... European Day of Languages  
 27–29, Saint Petersburg (Russia)  
 ..... 12th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

**OCTOBER**

3–4, Strasbourg  
 ..... Ministerial Conference: “Towards an integrated policy on psychoactive substances”  
 4–6, Strasbourg  
 ..... Session of the Conference of INGOs  
 4–8, Strasbourg  
 ..... Parliamentary Assembly Fourth Part Session  
 10 ..... European Day against the Death Penalty  
 11–17 ..... European Local Democracy Week  
 14–16, Venice (Italy)  
 ..... Venice Commission 84th Plenary Session  
 17 ..... International Day for the Eradication of Poverty  
 18 ..... European Organ Donation Day

25 ..... European Day of Civil Justice  
 26–28, Strasbourg  
 ..... 19th Plenary Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

**NOVEMBER**

3–4, Strasbourg  
 ..... 15th Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group  
 4, Strasbourg  
 ..... Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights  
 6 ..... 20th anniversary of the accession of Hungary to the Council of Europe  
 9 ..... International Day against fascism and antisemitism  
 9 ..... 15th anniversary of the accession of Ukraine to the Council of Europe  
 ..... 15th anniversary of the accession of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” to the Council of Europe  
 16 ..... International Day of Tolerance  
 20 ..... Universal Children’s Day  
 24–26, Turkey  
 ..... 30th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Justice  
 25 ..... International Day for the eradication of violence against women

**DECEMBER**

1 ..... World Aids Day  
 2 ..... International Day to abolish slavery / servitude  
 3 ..... International Day of Disabled Persons  
 5 ..... International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development  
 9 ..... International Day against Corruption  
 10 ..... International Human Rights Day  
 16–18, Venice (Italy)  
 ..... Venice Commission 85th Plenary Session  
 18 ..... International Day of Migrants