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INNOVATIVE

- Only if states work together is it possible to solve the major problems of today. This is why the Council of Europe was set up in 1949; it is now Europe's largest political organisation.

- From its headquarters in Strasbourg (France), the Council of Europe strives to protect the dignity of European nations and citizens, while preserving the values which underpin a tolerant and civilised society: democracy, human rights and the rule of law. All three are crucial to Europe's stability, economic growth and social cohesion. They lead the way in the search for common solutions to the main problems affecting all of us: terrorism; organised crime and corruption; cybercrime; issues in the fields of bioethics and cloning; racism and prejudice; violence against women and children; trafficking of human beings, and so on.

- Through its work, the Council of Europe expresses the concerns, hopes and aspirations of the 800 million citizens who live in its 47 member states.

- The European Union has also adopted the blue flag bearing a circle of 12 golden stars, the symbol of perfection, as well as the anthem taken from the prelude to the "Ode to Joy", from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Although the Council of Europe and European Union share these symbols, the two organisations have very different roles, duties and objectives.



PROGRESSIVE

- The yardsticks by which the Council of Europe's role is judged are legal, political, cultural and social.
- As it moves towards its objectives, the Council of Europe relies on ongoing dialogue between its main bodies and officials, ensuring that the action taken is concerted and effective. The bodies and officials concerned are:
 - **The Committee of Ministers**, comprising the ministers for foreign affairs of the 47 member states, but often meeting at the level of the diplomats who are their permanent representatives in Strasbourg. It decides on the Council of Europe's policy, approves its programme of activities and budget, and makes policy decisions which form the basis of European conventions and agreements, as well as the recommendations issued to member states.
 - **The Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)** is the Council of Europe's driving force, holding debates on policies which are then put to national governments. It has 636 members from member states' national parliaments (318 are full members, and each has a substitute who may stand in for him or her). The political make-up of each delegation reflects the distribution of seats amongst the parties in the national parliament concerned.
 - **The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities** represents Europe's regional and local government. It is a mouthpiece for European local and regional authorities, and its aim is not only to safeguard, but also to strengthen democracy throughout Europe.
 - **The Conference of INGOs** ensures that ordinary citizens have their say at the Council of Europe, providing a vital line of communication between political leaders and the voluntary organisations representing civil society.
 - **The European Court of Human Rights** safeguards the fundamental rights of all Europeans. Every application submitted to it is examined by the Court. Applications may be made by states or by individuals, irrespective of nationality, and the Court's decisions are binding on all the states that are parties to the European Convention on Human Rights.
 - **The Commissioner for Human Rights** makes sure that human rights are enforced in member states and that Council of Europe conventions and recommendations are put into practice.
 - **The Secretary General** is responsible for strategic planning, the Council of Europe budget and work programme, and for the day-to-day management of the Organisation.



VIGILANT

- The citizens of Europe must feel confident that their fundamental rights are guaranteed in all circumstances: the right to life, liberty and security; the right to a fair hearing in civil or criminal cases; the right to vote and to stand for election; respect for their family life; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression, etc.

- This is why the Council of Europe, like its member states, has always made the upholding and protection of human rights one of its fundamental objectives. The European Convention on Human Rights is the cornerstone of all its work.

- Having pioneered the drafting of legislation against cybercrime, the Council of Europe was also the first body to adopt legislative measures on both the cloning of human beings and the suppression of terrorism. It campaigns actively for a halt to violence against women and children, and for equality and dignity for all.

- The extent of the Council of Europe's dedication to protecting individuals' rights and dignity is clear from the amount of energy that it channels to their preservation. Numerous independent monitoring systems have been set up to counter the threats that exist to such freedoms, which are now protected by:

- the European Court of Human Rights;
- the European Committee of Social Rights;
- the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT);
- the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
- the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI);
- the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.

- Alongside respect for pluralist democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the abolition of the death penalty has now become a precondition for membership of the Council of Europe. Thanks to the determination of the Parliamentary Assembly, capital punishment has been prohibited in all Council of Europe member states since 1985.



• The Council of Europe is involved in many initiatives as it seeks solutions for our common problems. These solutions tend to be translated into conventions, resolutions or recommendations to member states. The main conventions designed to harmonise national legislation and bring it into line with the Organisation's standards are:

- the European Convention on Human Rights;
- the European Social Charter;
- the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism;
- the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
- the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine;
- the European Cultural Convention;
- the European Charter of Local Self-Government;
- the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities;
- the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime;
- the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches;
- the Anti-Doping Convention;
- the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats;
- the European Landscape Convention.

• The Council of Europe also takes part in a number of other important activities, sometimes in the framework of partial agreements between certain member states. This work is carried out through:

- the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI);
- the European Youth Centres, located in Strasbourg and Budapest;
- the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission);
- the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO);
- the Pompidou Group (a co-operation forum to prevent drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs);
- the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare (EDQM);
- the Council of Europe Development Bank;
- the European Audiovisual Observatory;
- the European Support Fund for the Co-production and Distribution of Creative Cinematographic and Audiovisual Works (Eurimages);
- the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre), in Lisbon (Portugal);
- the European Centre for Modern Languages, in Graz (Austria).





2009 – A year of anniversaries



2009 – A year of anniversaries

Some 10 years ago, in a document establishing the long-term prospects of the Organisation, the following question was posed: “If the Council of Europe didn’t exist, would it be necessary to create it?” Today, the answer would certainly still be yes.

With its roots in the post-war international institutions set up to promote democracy, the rule of law and human rights, modern European society has grown and flourished.

For decades, the Council of Europe has pursued its mandate to tend that growth. Some 10 countries signed the Treaty of London in 1949. Now, the Organisation has 47 member states, encompassing almost all European countries.

The Council has worked tirelessly to protect the human rights of Europe’s citizens, bringing them together to celebrate their many different backgrounds and cultures. The year 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the European Court of Human Rights, the 20th anniversary of the creation of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and 10 years since the establishment of the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

Democracy, the rule of law and human rights have blossomed in Europe on an unprecedented scale over the last 60 years, and the Council of Europe is dedicated to ensuring that the rights and legal standards that it has nurtured continue to bear healthy fruit for Europe’s citizens.

This annual report outlines the work carried out in 2009 by the various bodies and sectors of the Council of Europe.



Committee of Ministers

1. Introduction
2. Human rights
3. Democracy/good governance
4. Rule of law and legal co-operation
5. Social cohesion
6. Co-operation in the field of education, culture, environment and sport
7. Specific co-operation
8. Co-operation with the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE
9. Reforms for greater transparency and efficiency
10. Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member states of the Council of Europe
11. Permanent Representatives

Chairpersons of the Committee of Ministers



Miguel Ángel Moratinos

Spain

27 November 2008-12 May 2009



Samuel Žbogar

Slovenia

12 May 2009-18 November 2009



Micheline Calmy-Rey

Switzerland

18 November 2009-11 May 2010