

Nyt fra Europarådet

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PACE President welcomes decision on EU accession for Bulgaria and Romania, but recalls their Council of Europe commitments

Strasbourg, 26.09.2006 - René van der Linden, President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), has expressed support for the EU Commission's recommendation today that two Council of Europe member states - Bulgaria and Romania - accede to the EU on 1 January 2007 under several strict conditions.

"It was important not to lose the political momentum for accession, even if close scrutiny of several outstanding issues is deemed necessary," he said.

René van der Linden reminded both countries of the continuing necessity to respect their Council of Europe commitments, which formed the basis for the EU's accession criteria in the fields of democracy and human rights. "Although our experience shows that EU member or candidate countries generally make rapid progress, a country's EU membership does not release it from its commitments to the Council of Europe," he stressed. The same standards apply to all Council of Europe member states and PACE's Monitoring Committee remains vigilant about the implementation of reforms and respect for fundamental freedoms in all of our 46 member states," he said.

He also stressed that with enlargement of the EU, it was more than ever necessary to avoid duplication in the work of the Council of Europe and the EU.

Council of Europe Secretary General calls for talks instead of "referendum" in the Georgian region of South Ossetia

Strasbourg, 13.09.2006 - "The secessionist authorities of the South Ossetian region of Georgia are wasting time and effort on the organisation of a "referendum on independence" in November" said Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. "I do not think that anyone will recognise the result of such a referendum. If the people in power in South Ossetia are genuinely committed to the interest of the people they claim to represent, they should engage in meaningful negotiations with the Georgian government in order to find a peaceful, internationally accepted outcome. I regret the continuous loss of lives on both sides and call for an immediate start of dialogue to end the conflict which continues to cause distress to the people living in South Ossetia as well as undermining the territorial integrity of Georgia and stability in the region".

Statement by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the fight against terrorism

Strasbourg, 06.09.2006 - At today's meeting of the Committee of Ministers' Deputies, Terry Davis stated that "In recent days and weeks a number of terrorist attacks in several Council of Europe member states brutally demonstrated the fact that terrorism in Europe is not a passing phenomenon. It is not invincible, but it has become endemic, with a new generation of homegrown extremists, ready to strike against their neighbours, against their colleagues, against people they went to school with, against their fellow Europeans. Moreover, a few days ago, we marked the second anniversary of the Beslan massacre, one of the most tragic episodes in recent European history, which has shown that there are virtually no limits to the ruthlessness and cruelty of terrorists.

I want to use this opportunity to express my solidarity with the countries which have been affected by this recent wave of terrorist attacks. At the same time I also want to make an appeal for reinforced, concerted and focused Council of Europe action to strengthen our legal arsenal in the fight against terrorism. Terrorists can be defeated, but we must do better than words. This is why I am repeating my call for a speedier ratification of the Council of Europe anti-terrorist treaties, namely the Amending Protocol to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, and the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism.

None of these three critically important legal instruments has entered into force because not enough member states have ratified them. Three years since its adoption, the Amending Protocol to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism has been ratified by 22 countries. However to enter into force it requires ratification by ALL the parties to the main treaty, which are 44 countries to date. The Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism has been ratified by two member states and the Terrorist Financing Convention has not been ratified by anyone.

Instead of acting together, individual Council of Europe member states are left to react on their own. This is not good enough, but with proper political will in the capitals, it can change quickly and considerably, and I count on your help in getting there. I believe that there is no need to stress the magnitude of responsibility in matters where success or failure may be measured in human lives”.

PACE President reacts to George Bush’s admission of secret CIA prisons

Strasbourg, 07.09.2006 – Reacting to the statement by President Bush yesterday, René van der Linden, the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), made the following statement today:

“President Bush’s admission yesterday that there have been secret CIA prisons abroad vindicates the exhaustive investigation carried out by the Council of Europe in recent months. There were those who doubted our rapporteur Mr Marty and scorned his brief - they have been proved wrong, and the Council’s unique role in upholding European human rights values has been affirmed. Our work has helped to flush out the dirty nature of this secret war, which - we learn at last - has been carried out completely beyond any legal framework.

President Bush says that these secret detentions - and interrogations carried out under what he calls "an alternative set of procedures" - have prevented further attacks and saved lives. Because of the secrecy, this claim can never be verified. Yet even if it is true, such methods will, in the long term, make us less safe, not more. Kidnapping people and torturing them in secret - however tempting the short-term gain may appear to be - is what criminals do, not democratic governments. In the long term, such practices create more terrorists and undermine the values we are fighting for. Europe will have no part in such a degrading system.

All detainees must now to be treated according to the Geneva Conventions, and these fourteen suspects given a fair trial, fully in line with international and human rights law.

Countering terrorism is an absolute priority for the Council of Europe, and will remain at the top of our political agenda. But, as Mr Marty has rightly said, human rights violations committed in the fight against terrorism are in fact victories for the terrorists, whose very aim is to destroy the Rule of Law.”

Volga Forum Declaration: in favour of regular dialogue between the Council of Europe and religious communities

Nizhniy Novgorod, 08.09.2006 - The international conference on intercultural and interfaith dialogue organised by the Russian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe ended today with the adoption of the Volga Forum Declaration, in which the representatives of the Council of Europe and religious organisations from across Europe came out in favour of a regular dialogue on the issues of human rights, social cohesion and cultural diversity.

Over the two days' discussion, the conference participants stressed how important it was for representatives of religious communities to take an active part at international level, as they generally did at national level, in the debate on the topical issues with which Europe is confronted.

The declaration, which highlights the fundamental principles of freedom of religion, conscience and expression enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, calls on the media to act responsibly by reflecting the diversity of society and encouraging greater mutual understanding and respect for human dignity.

The competent authorities of the 46 Council of Europe member states, including local and regional authorities, are also encouraged to take rapid action to adopt policies setting out effective tools and measures to foster the democratic management of cultural diversity. The Volga Region provides an example of dialogue and co-operation among various ethnic groups and religious communities.

The Council of Europe has made it a priority to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in order to ensure not only a better understanding among cultures but also cohesion and stability in our societies, on the basis of the principle of accepting others, with their differences, and the principle of freedom of expression.

In 2007 the Council of Europe is to publish a White Paper on intercultural dialogue. Governmental and non-governmental organisations and religious organisations are invited to play an active part in its preparation.

Council of Europe publishes report on minority languages in Sweden

Strasbourg, 28.09.2006 – The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers has just made public the second report on the situation of minority languages in Sweden.

The Council of Europe calls on Sweden to extend the existing administrative areas for Finnish and Sami, in accordance with the proposals of the Government Commission for the Finnish and South Sami Languages set up by the Swedish authorities. The authorities should also adopt more specific legislation on minority languages and establish a national agency responsible for supervising its implementation at the municipal level.

This report has been drawn up by a committee of independent experts which evaluates the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Further to the report, the Committee of Ministers has adopted a series of recommendations addressed to Sweden. These include:

- better access to education in minority languages,
- adoption of innovative measures for the maintenance of the highly endangered South Sami language,
- steps to increase awareness and understanding concerning minority languages in Swedish society at large.

Full texts of the [report](#) and of the [Committee of Ministers' Recommendation](#) and further information can be found on the Charter's website (<http://www.coe.int/minlang>), or by contacting the Charter Secretariat (Directorate of Co-operation for Local and Regional Democracy, DG I - Legal Affairs, Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg, tel: +33 (0)3 90.21 52 77).

Domme afsagt af Den Europæiske Menneskerettighedsdomstol i nordiske sager

- 19.9.06 White v. Sweden (no. 42435/02): no violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life)
- 26.9.06 Elo v. Finland (no. 30742/02): no violation of Articles 6 §1 (right to a fair hearing)
- 26.9.06 H.K. v. Finland (no. 36065/97): violation of article 8 (right to respect for private and family life)
- 28.09.06 Iversen v. Denmark (5989/03): violation of Article 6 § 1 (length of proceedings)

Møder i oktober

(hvor intet andet er nævnt, holdes mødet i Strasbourg)

1. Valgobservation af parlamentsvalg i Bosnien-Hercegovina
- 2.-6. Session: Den Parlamentariske Forsamling
10. ECRI Round Table: Bekæmpelse af racisme og intolerance i Danmark (København)
11. Ministerkomitéen
- 12.-13. Justitsministerkonference (Jerevan). Tema: "Victims: place, rights and assistance"
- 17.-19. Ministerkomitéen
- 18.-19. Demokratiforum 2006 (Moskva). Tema: "The role of political parties in a democratic society"
- 20.-21. Uformelt sportsministermøde (Moskva). Tema: "Future pan-European sports co-operation"
21. Prix Europa (Berlin)
25. Ministerkomitéen
- 26.-27. Konference for ministre med ansvar for fysisk planlægning. Tema: "Networks for sustainable spatial development of the European continent"
31. Ministermøde I EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement (Marrakech). Tema: "Protecting societies from disasters through preparedness and prevention".

Møde i Oslo, 1.-2. November:

Regional seminar on action against trafficking in human beings.

"Nyt fra Europarådet" sendes til nyhedsmedierne i de nordiske lande 11 gange om året. Nærmere oplysninger om tidligere og kommende møder kan fås ved henvendelse til: Council of Europe Press Division, Tlf.: +33 3 88 41 25 60, Fax +33 3 88 41 39 11, E-mail: pressunit@coe.int, Internet: www.coe.int

