

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## Highlights 2018



Human rights,  
democracy and  
the rule of law

Activity report

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Human rights,  
democracy and  
the rule of law

Activity report

**HRH Crown Princess of Denmark**  
(Strasbourg, 23 January 2018)

**Liliane Maury Pasquier,**  
President of the Parliamentary  
Assembly of the Council of Europe  
(Strasbourg, 10 April 2018)

**Alexander Van der Bellen,**  
President of Austria (Strasbourg,  
25 January 2018)

**Luz Casal,** singer  
(Strasbourg, 19 November 2018)

**Happening**  
**“No hate speech movement”**  
(Strasbourg, 11 April 2018)

**French edition:**  
*Points forts 2018*

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**Thorbjørn Jagland,**  
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

# Foreword

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**Thorbjørn Jagland**

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

**S**eventy years after its foundation, the Council of Europe is our continent's leading human rights organisation. 47 member States have come together to agree common standards on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All 830 million people living in this common legal space have an ultimate right of appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. This is unprecedented in European history, and an achievement that we should celebrate.

— At the same time the Council of Europe remains vigilant and proactive to counter dangerous trends: Many parts of Europe today face threats to freedom of expression, discrimination of minorities and vulnerable people as well as risks to independent judiciaries and the rule of law. New challenges are emerging, including new forms of slavery and exploitation and the impact of artificial intelligence on human rights. Together with our member states we are therefore reinforcing our organisation to be ready to tackle tomorrow's challenges. The Council of Europe's activities described in these Highlights show we are making good progress.



Transfer of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers from Denmark to Croatia – **Miroslav Papa**, Permanent Representative of Croatia, new Chair of the Committee of Ministers, and **Arnold De Fine Skibsted**, Permanent Representative of Denmark and outgoing Chair (Strasbourg, 15 May 2018)



Croatia hands over the chairmanship to Finland – The new Chair of the Committee of Ministers, **Timo Soini**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and **Marija Pejčinović Burić**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, the outgoing Chair (Strasbourg, 21 November 2018)

# Committee of Ministers

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*The texts adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2018 can be consulted at: [www.coe.int/t/cm/](http://www.coe.int/t/cm/)*

**The Committee of Ministers acts as the main decision-making body of the Council of Europe. It is made up of member states' foreign ministers or their permanent diplomatic representatives in Strasbourg.**

**During 2018, the Committee of Ministers was chaired by Denmark until 18 May, then by Croatia until 21 November and thereafter by Finland.**

**T**he Committee held its **128th Ministerial Session** in Elsinore (Denmark) on 17 and 18 May 2018. On the eve of the session, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs held an informal discussion on the main current challenges facing the Council of Europe, and the Secretary General was invited to make reform proposals with a view to boosting the long-term impact of the Council of Europe's activities. These will cover a range of aspects such as ways to better protect and promote human rights throughout Europe, including in unresolved conflict zones; providing responses to new technological developments; and ways to stabilise the financing of the Organisation and to strengthen synergies between the Council of Europe's key bodies and with other international organisations.

■ The Ministerial Session was an opportunity for the Committee to consider important issues such as **the long-term effectiveness of the system of the European Convention on Human Rights** (ETS No. 5, the Convention). In this respect, it endorsed the Copenhagen Declaration adopted on the occasion of the High-level Conference "Continued Protection of the European Human Rights Convention System – Better Balance, Improved Protection" (Copenhagen, April 2018). The Committee welcomed the positive results achieved by all stakeholders over the last few years to strengthen the implementation of the Convention at the national level and the resulting decrease in the number of cases pending before the European Court of Human Rights (the Court). However, it also noted with concern that the Convention system continues to face significant challenges, notably linked to serious or widespread violations, to systemic and structural problems of human rights in states parties, and to the situation in unresolved conflict zones. It urged those states parties that have not yet signed and ratified Protocols Nos. 15 (CETS No. 213) and 16 (CETS No. 214) to the Convention to consider doing so without further delay.





**Meeting of the Committee of Ministers**  
(Strasbourg, 24 October 2018)

■ At its session, the Committee also adopted the **Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data** (ETS No. 108), which addresses the challenges to privacy resulting from the use of new information and communication technologies and strengthens the convention's mechanism to ensure its effective implementation.

■ The Committee of Ministers also took note of the 5th report of the Secretary General entitled "State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – Role of institutions. Threats to institutions". Finally, with regard to the Russian Federation's non-payment of its financial obligations since June 2017, it was recalled at the Ministerial Session that financial contributions are a statutory obligation from which no member state can be exonerated and which member states willingly undertake when becoming a member of the Council of Europe.

■ The Committee of Ministers held four specific human rights meetings to supervise **the execution of judgments** delivered by the European Court of Human Rights. It decided to close its supervision of 2 703 judgments of the Court, thus leaving approximately 6 000 cases pending before it at the end of the year (compared to 7 584 cases the previous year).

■ During the year, it also held exchanges of views with the President of the European Court of Human Rights and with the Commissioner for Human Rights.

■ Important developments took place in other priority areas in 2018. In the field of **migration**, the Committee held regular exchanges with Ambassador Tomáš Boček, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, with regard to his fact-finding missions in member states and also with regard to progress made in the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-2019). The activities carried out under the action plan have a special focus on unaccompanied and separated children and aim at ensuring access to rights and child-friendly procedures, providing effective protection from violence and enhancing the integration of children who remain in Europe.

■ **The fight against terrorism** remains a priority for the Organisation. To this end, in July, the Committee approved the Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2018-2022), which is structured around three main pillars: prevention of terrorism, prosecution of perpetrators of terrorist offences and protection of all persons present on the territories of the member states against terrorism. It also held an exchange of views with Ms Michèle Coninx, Assistant Secretary General, Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTED).

Opening ceremony for the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 30 May 2018)



— The Committee of Ministers, through various decisions and declarations throughout the year, reaffirmed its unequivocal opposition to the **death penalty**, including any reintroduction of it, in all places and in all circumstances. It reiterated the objective to create a death penalty-free zone in Europe, welcomed the global trend towards abolition of the death penalty and encouraged all member states to support this trend by lobbying the authorities of those countries which still use the death penalty. The Committee deeply regretted that executions continued to be carried out in Japan and the United States, two Council of Europe observer states, as well as in Belarus.

— In November, the Committee of Ministers adopted a series of decisions to strengthen the monitoring mechanism of the **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** (ETS No. 148), to mark the 20th anniversary of the charter and to allow, in particular, a greater co-ordination with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157). This will lead to a comprehensive evaluation of the situation of national minorities and regional or minority languages in Europe every five years. In the field of **Roma**<sup>1</sup> protection, the Deputies examined and took

1. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote not a definition of Roma and/or Traveller.

note of an implementation report on the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019).

— In the field of **sport**, the Committee of Ministers held an exchange of views with Mr Aleksander Čeferin, President of UEFA, in the framework of the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). A Memorandum of Understanding was also approved with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). In the field of **gender equality**, in March the Committee of Ministers adopted a new **Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023**. As regards **the fight against racism**, the Committee took note of the revised General Policy Recommendation No. 2 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at the national level.

**128th session of the Committee  
of Ministers in Denmark**  
(Elsinore, 18 May 2018)



■ The situation in a number of member states was regularly discussed by the Committee of Ministers, including co-operation activities aimed at accompanying individual countries in their efforts to bring legislation, institutions and practice further into line with European standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. In this respect, it took note of the final report on the implementation of the Programmatic Co-operation Document for **Albania** for 2015-2017. Concerning **Armenia**, the Committee noted with satisfaction the final report on the implementation of the Action Plan 2015-2018 and instructed the Secretariat to prepare a new action plan for 2019-2022. As regards **Azerbaijan**, it approved an action plan to provide assistance for the period 2018 to 2021.

■ The Committee took note of a final report on the implementation of the Action Plan 2015-2017 for **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and approved a new action plan for 2018-2021. In the light of a report on respect for the obligations and commitments undertaken by Bosnia and Herzegovina, it welcomed the improvement of that country's Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF) regime, as well as its contribution to stability in the region, including its co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. It called on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement all the specific recommendations on the outstanding commitments indicated in the above-mentioned report, in particular those related to electoral and judicial reforms.

■ In May and October, the Committee held discussions respectively on the Secretary General's 17th and 18th consolidated reports on the conflict in **Georgia**. In May it adopted a series of decisions on this matter. In particular, it reiterated the unequivocal support of the Council of Europe member states for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders. It expressed profound concern that the human rights situation in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia has been further deteriorating and called on the authorities exercising effective control to take a series of measures. It also called for the ceasing of arbitrary detention of persons; ensuring that residents of the Georgian regions concerned are not subject to discrimination and investigating allegations of human rights violations. The Committee also, inter alia, called on the Russian Federation to secure immediate and unrestricted access to the territories beyond the control of the Government of Georgia to the Council of Europe bodies. In October 2018, the Committee welcomed the progress made in implementing the Action Plan for **Georgia** 2016-2019, and encouraged the achievement of all the objectives contained therein.

■ In March, the Committee of Ministers approved an action plan to provide assistance to **Ukraine** for the period 2018-2021.



■ Co-operation with other international bodies remained a priority in 2018. At the Ministerial Session in May, the Committee of Ministers took note with satisfaction of the increase in co-operation between the Council of Europe and the **European Union**. With regard to the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**, the Co-ordination Group between the two organisations held two meetings in 2018 to review co-operation. The Committee also held an exchange of views with the Coordinator for the Italian Presidency of the OSCE, Ambassador Vinicio Mati.

■ In June, in the context of the implementation of the Joint Declaration on the reinforcement of co-operation between the Council of Europe and the **International Organisation of La Francophonie**, the Committee of Ministers took note of the 2018-2019 co-operation programme. Finally, the Committee approved the text of a draft **United Nations** General Assembly resolution on co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe and invited the delegations of all member states to co-sponsor and actively promote the draft resolution in the United Nations.

■ As regards relations with non-member states, 2018 saw positive developments. As far as co-operation with **Belarus** is concerned, the Committee of Ministers took note in January 2018 of a progress review report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Belarus 2016-2017 and agreed to extend the action plan until the end of 2018 to enable all the objectives set therein to be achieved. During the year, the Committee of Ministers approved Neighbourhood Partnerships for the period 2018-2021 with **Morocco and Tunisia**. It also took note of a final report on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for **Kazakhstan** 2014-2015 (extended until 2018) and invited the Secretariat to continue the discussions with the authorities in Kazakhstan with regard to the preparation of a new document of co-operation. Finally, the Committee also took note of progress review reports on the priorities for co-operation with the **Kyrgyz Republic** for 2015-2017 (extended until 2019), as well as with **Palestine**<sup>2</sup> for the period 2016-2018 and instructed the Secretariat to pursue implementation of the co-operation priorities in 2019.

2. This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member states on this issue.

**Liliane Maury Pasquier,**  
President of  
the Parliamentary Assembly  
of the Council of Europe  
(Strasbourg, 10 April 2018)



**Alexander Van der Bellen,**  
President of Austria

**Peter Pellegrini,**  
Prime Minister of the Slovak  
Republic

**Andrej Plenković,**  
Prime Minister of the Republic  
of Croatia



**Lars Løkke Rasmussen,**  
Prime Minister of Denmark

**Serzh Sargsyan,**  
President of Armenia

**HRH Crown Princess of  
Denmark**

**Nikola Dimitrov,**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
North Macedonia



**Jean Asselborn,**  
Minister for Foreign and  
European Affairs of  
Luxembourg

**Marija Pejčinović Burić,**  
Deputy Prime Minister  
and Minister of Foreign and  
European Affairs of Croatia,  
Chairperson of the Committee  
of Ministers of the Council  
of Europe

**Khemaies Jhinaoui,**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
the Tunisian Republic



**HSH Hereditary Prince Alois  
of Liechtenstein and HRH  
Hereditary Princess Sophie  
of Liechtenstein**

# Parliamentary Assembly

*The functioning of the Parliamentary Assembly, its rules, work, events, calendar, the profiles of its members and their activities within the Assembly, as well as the texts adopted by the Assembly in 2018, can be found on the Assembly website: <http://assembly.coe.int>*

**The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, consisting of representatives from the national parliaments of member states, provides a forum for debate and proposals on Europe's social and political issues. Many Council of Europe conventions originate from the Assembly, including the European Convention on Human Rights.**

**President of the Parliamentary Assembly: Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier (Switzerland)**

## A PAN-EUROPEAN FORUM TO DEBATE MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUES

**D**uring 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was presided over by Mr Michele Nicoletti (until June 2018) and Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, both representing the Group of Socialists, Democrats and Greens.

— In January 2017 the Assembly took the unprecedented step of setting up an independent, external investigation to look into specific allegations of corruption made against some of its members and former members. This body, made up of three distinguished former judges, began its work in June 2017 and delivered its final report in April 2018.

— In Resolution 2216 (2018) and Recommendation 2128 (2018) on the follow-up to that report, the Assembly sets out the steps it is taking in response and declared its commitment to creating “an environment of zero tolerance for corruption”. **The Assembly's Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs** has also applied the procedure provided for cases of alleged violation of the Code of Conduct to individual members or former members named in the Investigation Body's report, holding a series of hearings with those concerned. This has resulted in a number of decisions, such as depriving former members of the right to access Council of Europe premises for life. Furthermore, in 2018, the Assembly members were for the first time called upon to submit their declarations of interests. The first declaration cycle was completed by the end of September 2018.



**Parliamentary Assembly Session,**  
**Speech by Alexander Van der Bellen,** President of Austria  
(Strasbourg, 25 January 2018)

■ As a follow-up to Resolution 2186 (2017), “Call for a Council of Europe summit to reaffirm European unity and to defend and promote democratic security in Europe”, the Assembly set up an Ad Hoc Committee of the Bureau to reflect on its identity, role and mission as a statutory organ of the Council of Europe and a pan-European forum for interparliamentary dialogue. Chaired by the President of the Assembly, the Ad hoc Committee brought together the representatives of parliaments of all 47 member states and conducted an in-depth consultation on a wide range of issues, including PACE’s nature and identity, its functions, relations with other Council of Europe bodies, external relations and internal functioning. In June 2018, the PACE Bureau approved the proposals contained in the report of the Ad hoc Committee – a 12-point blueprint – for an in-depth reform of the Assembly with a view to enhancing its impact within the Organisation and member states, as well as improving its functioning and members’ involvement in its work.

■ As in 2017, following the decision of the Russian Parliament not to present the credentials of a delegation, the Assembly counted on the participation of 46 member state delegations. Dialogue with members of the Russian Parliament took place in the framework of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Bureau on the role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly, whose work was based on an inclusive approach – allowing parliamentarians from all 47 member states to participate.

■ Among the dignitaries who addressed the Assembly in 2018 were Crown Princess Mary of Denmark; the Presidents of Armenia and Austria; the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Croatia and the Slovak Republic; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”<sup>3</sup> and Tunisia; and several other eminences who addressed the Assembly in the context of specific debates.

■ During its four part-sessions and three meetings of the Standing Committee in 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly debated issues of major political relevance in Europe, adopting 55 resolutions and 26 recommendations. It observed elections in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Turkey and elected judges to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Albania, Montenegro, Norway, San Marino and Spain.

■ The Assembly awarded the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize to Mr Oyub Titiev (Russian Federation), head of the Grozny office of the Memorial Human Rights Centre in Chechnya, in detention since January 2018; the Europe Prize went to the city of Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine); and the 2019 Council of Europe Museum Prize was awarded to the Museum of Communication in Bern, Switzerland.

3. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.



**Award ceremony for the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize – Liliane Maury Pasquier**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the representative of **Oyub Titiev** (Russian Federation), winner of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize (Parliamentary Assembly Session, Strasbourg, 8 October 2018)

## WORK IN COMMITTEES

— The Assembly's committees carried out the preparatory work leading to plenary debates, often enriching it with the organisation of hearings and conferences.

— The **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy** focused on key topics such as the protection of victims of terrorism, challenges to democracy resulting from misuse of the internet, the fight against corruption, and foreign funding of Islam in Europe. It considered institutional and electoral issues related to referendums and electoral systems in close liaison with the Venice Commission. The Committee pursued dialogue with Partners for Democracy and considered challenges to stability in neighbouring regions. It also organised a conference on building democratic security in the Mediterranean.

— The **Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights** maintained its support for Council of Europe treaties with proposals to improve implementation of Court judgments and recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment (CPT) and calls for stricter limitations on states of emergency and derogations and enhanced human rights monitoring in "grey zones". It continued to call on member states to stop any unjustified restrictions on NGO activities and reprisals against human rights defenders and called for a new convention on the lawyers' profession. It addressed key issues in the fight against organised crime and corruption, including the "Laundromat" money-laundering scandals and the confiscation of illegal assets, and new threats to the rule of law, such as the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. While turning its attention to emerging issues such as hybrid war and artificial intelligence, it continued opposing the death penalty, everywhere and on any grounds.





**Launching of the #NotInMyParliament initiative to counter sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments**  
(Helsinki, 23 November 2018)

■ The **Monitoring Committee** prepared a report on the honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was debated in the Assembly. Two periodic review reports, for Iceland and Italy, were prepared in the framework of the 2018 progress report of the Monitoring Procedure of the Assembly. The Sub-Committee on Conflicts between Council of Europe Member States held a round table on the political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.

■ The **Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons** focused on issues such as the humanitarian needs and rights of IDPs (internally displaced persons) in Europe, the situation of refugees in the countries neighbouring Syria and externalisation of EU migration processes and the international obligation to protect lives at sea, as well as on the rights of migrant children and preferred alternatives to their detention in the framework of the ongoing Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children.

■ The **Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development** worked on topics such as social rights, public health, children's rights, sustainable development – in particular the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – and good governance. Together with the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, the committee held discussions on an action plan consisting of 10 key steps to combat sexual violence against children in sport. The committee also held a joint debate with the Equality and Non-Discrimination Committee on the topic of involuntary measures in psychiatry.

■ Promoting equality and inclusion across the board while tackling all forms of intolerance continued to be at the heart of the activities of the **Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination**, not only through the reports it prepared but also through the networks it co-ordinated: the Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence and the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance. The committee adopted a report, "Private and family life: achieving equality regardless of sexual orientation". In other texts, it called on Council of Europe member states to recognise the status of sign languages and to introduce safeguards to protect the human rights of people with disabilities who are in detention. The committee continued to pay great attention to achieving gender equality and tackling violence against women, adopting, among other things, reports on women's economic empowerment, the gender perspective of integration policies and forced marriage in Europe. It also organised a hearing on the backlash against women's rights in Europe, during which it discussed how to deal with attacks against the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, Istanbul Convention).

■ On the initiative of its Parliamentary Network Women Free from Violence, in 2018 the Assembly, jointly with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), carried out a regional study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe. On the basis of the study's conclusions, the President of the Assembly launched, on 23 November 2018, at the meeting of the Assembly's Standing Committee in Helsinki, Finland, a hash-tag initiative #NotInMyParliament, aiming at promoting zero tolerance for sexist speech and behaviour, harassment and gender-based violence in parliaments and elsewhere.



**Visit by HRH Crown Princess of Denmark –  
Danish Radio National Girls Choir**  
(Strasbourg, 23 January 2018)

■ The **Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media** paid close attention to the freedom of the media, as well as the threats that malicious use of the internet creates for the functioning of democratic institutions. It finalised reports on the protection of editorial integrity and media freedom as a condition for democratic elections. It also addressed the issue of information disorder and the need to better protect human rights in the digital environment. In the field of culture and heritage, it has addressed the issue of the destruction and illegal trafficking of cultural heritage and the safeguarding and enhancing of intangible cultural heritage.

■ The **Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs** continued to actively contribute to promoting parliamentary ethics, in particular strengthening transparency, accountability and integrity of its members. The committee examined the existing regulatory framework regarding the decision-making process of the Assembly on the credentials of national delegations and “sanctions” by the deprivation or suspension of the exercise of rights of participation and representation.

## CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES WITH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

■ The Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly continued to develop co-operation programmes at the parliamentary level to ensure better implementation by member states of key Assembly resolutions and to reach out to a greater number of members of national parliaments through peer-to-peer parliamentary seminars. In 2018 it focused its efforts on the development of co-operation at a regional level with the Parliaments of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Palestine.<sup>4</sup> The Assembly continued to contribute to the action plans for Ukraine, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, concentrating on the issues of parliamentary democracy, status of public administration and democratic elections.

4. This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member states on this issue.



**Anders Knape,**  
President of the Congress of Local and Regional  
Authorities, elected in November 2018  
(Strasbourg, 6 November 2018)

**Meeting of the Current Affairs Committee  
of the Congress at the 35th Session**  
(Strasbourg, 6 November 2018)



# Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

*The texts adopted by the Congress in 2018 can be found on its website [www.coe.int/t/Congress/](http://www.coe.int/t/Congress/)*

**The Congress is the political assembly responsible for assessing the situation of local and regional democracy in the 47 Council of Europe member states and improving its quality. It implements the local and regional dimension of the Council of Europe's action in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Congress is made up of 648 members holding elective office and represents over 200 000 local and regional authorities in Europe. The statutory activities of the Congress derive from the European Charter of Local Self-Government, a legally binding instrument which affirms the role of cities and regions as the first level at which democratic rights are exercised.**

**President of the Congress: Anders Knape (Sweden), since November 2018**

## ROLE OF THE CONGRESS

**T**he Congress is entrusted with monitoring local and regional democracy and monitoring the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) by member states as well as observing local and regional elections and submitting recommendations to the Committee of Ministers as the basis for improving legislation and practice in the countries concerned.

■ In 2018, Congress delegations monitored the situation of local and regional democracy in Lithuania, Slovenia, Georgia, Poland, Moldova, Russia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and observed the local and/or regional elections in the Netherlands, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo and Mostar) and Slovenia. A Congress delegation also assessed in May 2018 the first municipal elections held in Tunisia since the Arab Spring in 2011.

■ Besides being the monitoring body for the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the Congress is a forum for politicians, an assembly of mayors and councillors to discuss issues of relevance for their citizens.

■ The Congress meets in session twice a year and holds two annual meetings of its chambers and of its three committees. In 2018, the Congress held its two annual sessions in March and in November.

■ The overarching theme of the 34th Session in March was "rights-based governance at local and regional level". The Congress members discussed in particular the role of local and regional elected

representatives and officials in integrating the human rights dimension into their daily work and adopted a resolution to promote the dissemination of examples of good practice implemented by local and regional authorities throughout Europe. In this regard, they held a debate on the role and responsibilities of local authorities regarding unaccompanied refugee children.

■ As part of the Congress's regular monitoring of the situation of local and regional democracy in Europe, members examined the reports on local democracy in Latvia and in the smaller Council of Europe member states, namely Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino, and held a debate on the common challenges faced by smaller states in implementing the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The debate held in the presence of the ministers from the members states concerned concluded that complying with the charter enables these "smaller member states" to speak to all European countries as equals. Of a size closer to a local authority than a state, they are often models of local democracy. The Congress also adopted a report on local elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"<sup>5</sup> and an information report on local elections in Georgia. In addition, the results of the fact-finding mission on the situation of local elected representatives in the Republic of Moldova were presented.

5. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.



**Speech by Antoni Martí Petit,**  
Prime Minister  
of the Principality of Andorra  
(Strasbourg, 28 March 2018)



**Xavier Cadoret,**  
President of the Chamber  
of Local Authorities  
(Strasbourg, 6 November 2018)

■ A debate on “mayors under pressure” provided an overview of the difficulties faced by mayors in carrying out their mandate and two debates focused on regional challenges: the first one examined regional identity and the integrity of the nation state and the second looked at the regional referendum as a democratic tool.

■ The 35th session in November focused on the integrity and ethical behaviour of local and regional elected representatives. The Congress debated reports on conflicts of interest, on making public procurement transparent and on transparency and open government, and adopted the code of conduct for local and regional politicians.

■ It also discussed reports about the voting rights of IDPs, about the situation of local democracy in Georgia, Lithuania and Slovenia and about election observation in the Netherlands, Moldova and Tunisia. An exchange of views took place with the chair of the Committee of Ministers, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, and with the ministers responsible for local government from Armenia and Georgia.

■ The Chamber of Regions discussed the challenges of migration for border regions under the banner “Territorial solidarity: regional self-government or regional selfish government?”. The Chamber of Local Authorities continued its debate and exchange on the topic of mayors under pressure.

■ During this session, the Congress also elected its new president – Anders Knappe (Sweden) – the presidents of its two chambers – Xavier Cadoret (France) and Gunn Marit Helgesen (Norway) – and the vice-presidents and chairs and vice-chairs of its three committees. In his incoming speech the new president underlined that the Congress was a political body tasked with protecting local democracy and

was the only organisation responsible for monitoring implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. As such it was an important part of the Council of Europe and of the system of safeguarding democracy in Europe. Among the key themes he intended to promote during his two-year presidency, he mentioned youth participation in political life, the fight against corruption, gender equality and also the pressure and threats facing local and regional elected representatives.

■ A group of 40 young delegates chosen from 40 Council of Europe member states – youth activists, youth workers, students and young political leaders – participated in the two sessions as part of the Congress’s ongoing initiative to promote youth engagement in politics.

■ The Congress is also an operational body that implements the local and regional dimension of Council of Europe action plans for specific member states or within the Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions and multilaterally in the framework of specific partnerships, such as the European Union’s Eastern Partnership.

■ In 2018, the Congress implemented activities in Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia and in the southern Mediterranean, in particular in Morocco and Tunisia. In Ukraine in July, for example, the Congress launched the project “Strengthening democracy and building trust at local level in Ukraine”. Since then, Ukrainian mayors and councillors have enhanced their knowledge of transparency, open government, e-governance and gender mainstreaming at local level through a series of round tables and study visits. Furthermore, in Ukraine and Armenia, progress was made in strengthening the advocacy capacities of associations and consultation processes with central governments. In Tunisia, the Congress contributed its expertise to the adoption of the Code of Local Authorities.



**Gunn Marit Helgesen**,  
President of the Chamber  
of Regions  
(Strasbourg, 6 November 2018)

The President of the Congress, **Gudrun Mosler-Törnström**, met with the President of the Republic of Belarus, **Alexander Lukashenko**. They discussed the importance of local self-government (Minsk, 11 September 2018)



■ The Congress also developed in 2018 its relations with Belarus, and in September it organised in Minsk a Round Table on the European Charter of Local Self-Government with all stakeholders in the country.

■ The Congress implements the local and regional dimension of the Council of Europe core activities in the field of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

■ Beyond its two annual sessions, much of the Congress's work is done during field missions, in political dialogue with member states and through co-operation programmes, and in the co-ordination with the intergovernmental sector and with its external partners like the Committee of the Regions of the EU. With the latter, a revised Co-operation Agreement was signed during the Congress session in March. The concrete results of much of this work will surface at a later stage in the form of reports, joint events and handbooks or toolkits, for example.

■ Some visible results of this work in 2018 were, for instance, the brochures published about mayors who are leaders for change and the brochures on citizen participation, which have been developed in close co-operation with mayors in the countries of the Eastern Partnership of the European Union. Other major publications prepared in 2018 were a human rights manual (March 2018), a practical guide to administrative resources and fair elections (March 2018) and the revised code of conduct for local and regional politicians (November 2018), aimed at helping local and regional representatives to fulfil their duties.

## THE 30 YEARS OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

■ On 1 September 2018, the Congress celebrated the 30th anniversary of the entry into force of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The European Charter of Local Self-Government is one of the key conventions of the Council of Europe, which has been ratified by all 47 member states. Since 1988, the charter has also fostered common standards across Europe and established a model of European society characterised by local self-government as part of democratic government, as part of a system of checks and balances and as part of citizen participation.

## MAKING THE CONGRESS FIT FOR PURPOSE

■ In 2010 the first chapter of a substantial reform of the Congress was written. The reform focused on the perimeter of the responsibilities of the Congress that is the local and regional dimension of the Council of Europe. During this reform, the Congress made its monitoring and elections' observation more professional, regular and methodologically consistent and also added a post-monitoring dialogue, which led to road maps signed with national governments as well as the inclusion of Congress recommendations in the preparation of Council of Europe action plans.

■ The second chapter of the Congress reform was started in 2018 and is ongoing. It has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The Congress will continue to maintain its spirit of improvement, innovation and reform aimed at delivering the results it was tasked to achieve by the Heads of States and Governments at the Council of Europe Summits in 1993 and 2005. It also intends to further strengthen its institutional role as a second political assembly of the Council of Europe.



Visit by the President of Austria to the European Court of Human Rights – **Alexander Van der Bellen**, President of Austria, and **Guido Raimondi**, President of the European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg, 25 January 2018)

# European Court of Human Rights

*echr.coe.int*

The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights in the 47 Council of Europe member states. Individuals can bring complaints of human rights violations to the Strasbourg Court once all possibilities of appeal have been exhausted in the member state concerned.

**President of the Court: Guido Raimondi (Italy)**

## SAN JOSÉ DECLARATION – REINFORCING INSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COURTS

In July a delegation from the Court travelled to San José in Costa Rica to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the entry into force of the American Convention on Human Rights. The presidents of the three regional human rights courts – the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights and the European Court of Human Rights – signed the San José Declaration. This declaration established a permanent forum of institutional dialogue between the three regional courts as a tool for reinforcing co-operation and institutional links between them. Soon after the signing of the declaration, in November 2018, the Court received a delegation of judges from the Inter-American Court and organised a joint seminar at the Court on the subject of mass human rights violations.

## PROTOCOL NO. 16 ENTERS INTO FORCE

On the occasion of the High-Level Conference on the reform of the European Convention of Human Rights system (11-13 April in Copenhagen), Ms Nicole Belloubet, French Minister of Justice, deposited the instrument of ratification in the presence of the Organisation’s Secretary General. On 1 August 2018 Protocol No. 16 came into force. Some 10 member states have so far signed and ratified it: Albania, Armenia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Lithuania, San Marino, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Protocol No. 16, known as “the dialogue protocol”, enables the highest national courts and tribunals, as designated by the member states concerned, to request an advisory opinion from the European Court of Human Rights on questions of principle relating to the interpretation or application of the rights and freedoms defined in the Convention or its protocols. Advisory opinions, which are delivered by the Grand Chamber, contain reasons and are not binding. Requests for advisory opinions are made in the context of cases pending before the national court or tribunal concerned. The Court is at liberty to choose whether to accept a request or not.





Visit by **Lars Løkke Rasmussen**, the Prime Minister of Denmark to the European Court of Human Rights with **Guido Raimondi**, President of the Court (Strasbourg, 24 January 2018)

— The President of the Court, Guido Raimondi, heralded this as a historic development: “The entry into force of Protocol No. 16 will strengthen dialogue between the European Court of Human Rights and the highest national courts. This is a fundamental step in the history of the European Convention on Human Rights and a major development in human rights protection in Europe. It also represents a new challenge for our Court.”

— On 16 October 2018 the Court received its first request for an advisory opinion from the French Court of Cassation regarding a case concerning a child born abroad to a surrogate mother. The proceedings before the Court of Cassation were adjourned pending the Court’s advisory opinion. On 3 December 2018, the Grand Chamber Panel accepted the request.

### **INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE AND THE SUPERIOR COURTS NETWORK**

— In 2018 the Court held exchanges with the Spanish Constitutional and Supreme Courts, the San Marino Constitutional Court, the Greek Court of Cassation, the Conseil d’Etat and Court of Cassation in France, the Icelandic Supreme Court, the Irish Supreme Court, and several superior courts in the United Kingdom, including the Supreme Court.

— The Court also received visits from major European leaders in 2018, including the Presidents of Armenia and Austria, the Prime Ministers of Denmark and Croatia and the Heads of Government of Andorra and Spain. The president also met with His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain.

— The Superior Courts Network (SCN) grew significantly in 2018 and now numbers 71 superior courts from 35 countries. The second SCN Focal Points Forum took place on 8 June 2018, demonstrating that the network is now very much part of the Convention landscape.

### **THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW COURT**

— On 1 November 1998, Protocol No. 11 to the European Convention of Human Rights (ETS No. 155) entered into force and marked the beginning of a new era in the enforcement of the European Convention on Human Rights. The old Commission and the Court responsible for supervising the enforcement of the Convention were merged into a single European Court of Human Rights, which was to carry out its functions on a permanent and full-time basis.

— To celebrate the 20th anniversary of Protocol No. 11, a joint seminar was organised by the Court with the Finnish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. The seminar highlighted the work carried out by the Court during the past 20 years and sought to address the principal challenges the Court will face in the years to come.

— Since its establishment in 1998, the permanent Court has dealt with more than 800 000 applications and delivered nearly 21 000 judgments.



**Grand Chamber hearing in the case of *Strand Lobben and Others v. Norway***  
(Strasbourg, 17 October 2018)



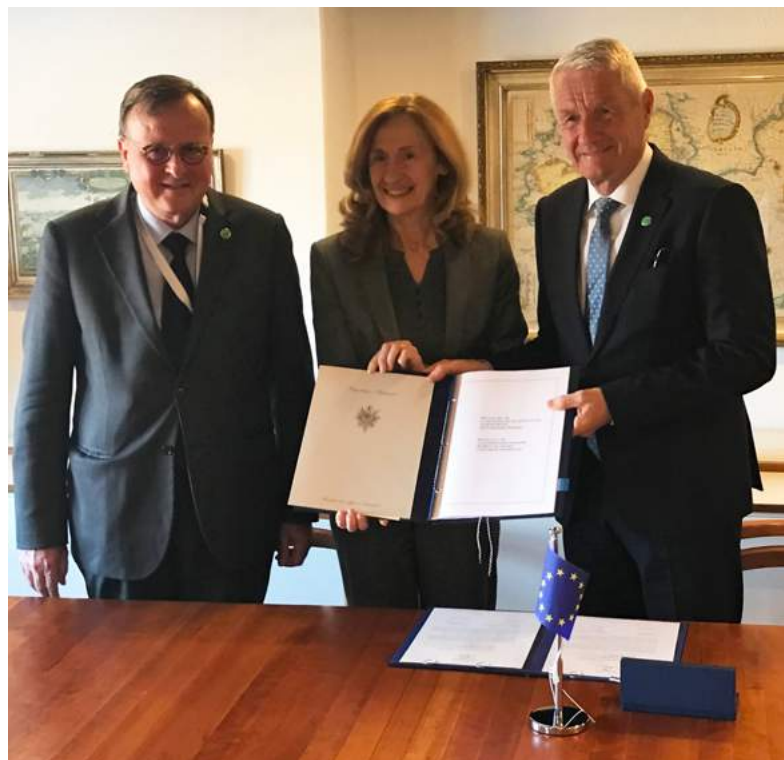
**Seminar on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the "new Court"**  
(Strasbourg, 26 November 2018)

## PROCEDURAL INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVING WORKING METHODS

Despite significant improvements in the Court's efficiency, the challenge of reducing the backlog of non-repetitive Chamber cases and priority cases remains. With this in mind, in 2018 the Court and its Registry continued to test and implement new working methods and procedures. After almost 60 years of Court judgments, there is well-established case law in many fields. As a consequence, more applications can and will be adjudicated by committees.

The simplified communication procedure known as immediate simplified communication, or IMSI has proved very successful. IMSI was introduced by way of a test phase in 2016 in order to speed up the communication stage of Chamber applications. In cases for which it is appropriate, the Court forwards the applicant's complaint directly to the respondent state. This has helped to significantly reduce the workload associated with the pre-drafting stage of a case. There has been a clear increase in the overall volume of communicated cases since the introduction of IMSI.

On 18 December the Court announced its intention to introduce a new practice from 1 January 2019 involving a dedicated, non-contentious phase in respect of all contracting states. The Court will decide whether to continue this practice at the end of a one-year test period. The purpose of introducing such a phase is to facilitate friendly settlements.



Ratification of Protocol No. 16 to the European Convention on Human Rights – **Guido Raimondi**, President of the European Court of Human Rights, **Nicole Belloubet**, French Minister of Justice and **Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
(Copenhagen, 11 April 2018)



The Commissioner for Human Rights, **Dunja Mijatović**,  
several days after taking office  
(Strasbourg, 3 April 2018)

# Commissioner for Human Rights

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Information on the Commissioner's work in 2018 can be found at: [www.coe.int/commissioner](http://www.coe.int/commissioner)  
The Commissioner's Twitter account is @CommissionerHR.

**The Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent and impartial non-judicial institution established by Council of Europe to promote awareness of and respect for human rights in the 47 Council of Europe member states.**

**Nils Muižnieks' mandate as Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights came to an end on 31 March 2018. His successor, Dunja Mijatović, was elected by the Parliamentary Assembly in January and took up her duties on 1 April 2018.**

In a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Malta, published on 16 January, Commissioner Muižnieks urged the government to address gender inequality and violence against women. He called on the authorities to allocate more financial resources to social care for victims of domestic violence and address the shortage of places in women's shelters. He also reiterated his call for an open and informed debate on women's access to abortion care. The Commissioner also addressed a letter to the Minister for Home Affairs and National Security of Malta, published on 1 February, in which he underscored the need to remove obstacles to migrant integration.

On 22 January, the Commissioner published a letter addressed to the President of the National Assembly of Bulgaria in which he urged its parliament to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. He stressed the importance of eliminating misconceptions in public debate regarding this convention, underlining that there is no hidden agenda and that its main goal is preventing violence against women and domestic violence, protecting the victims and prosecuting the perpetrators.

From 29 January to 2 February, the Commissioner conducted a mission to "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"<sup>6</sup> which focused on social cohesion, interaction and understanding in a multi-ethnic society. He stressed the importance of inclusive and integrated education, including for children with disabilities. The Commissioner also encouraged the authorities to take action in many human rights-related areas, including police violence and misconduct and hate crimes.

The Commissioner's letter addressed to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland was published on 6 February. The letter concerned the developments affecting the independence of the judiciary; women's access to sexual and reproductive rights; the deteriorating environment for NGOs active in the area of women's rights and assistance to victims of domestic violence; and attacks against the independence and effectiveness of the ombudsman.

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6. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.

Commissioner **Dunja Mijatović**  
speaking with children in the  
special school for children with  
disabilities "3 qershori"  
(Tirana, 25 May 2018)



■ On 16 February, the Commissioner published a report following his visit to Sweden from 2 to 6 October 2017. The report focused on the human rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers and the human rights of people with disabilities. The Commissioner urged the authorities to enhance the protection of asylum seekers notably by returning to the levels of protection in place before the surge in arrivals, strengthening support for unaccompanied migrant children and establishing a statelessness determination procedure. He also called for the full incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Swedish law.

■ As a follow-up to his visit report of July 2015, the Commissioner carried out a mission to Serbia from 19 to 22 February, focusing on issues relating to transitional justice, freedom of the media and inclusive education. A substantive press release was issued at the end of the mission.

■ Commissioner Muižnieks carried out a follow-up mission to the Slovak Republic from 12 to 16 March where he mainly addressed inclusive education. He also raised the issue of the murder of the journalist Ján Kuciak and the related investigation. A substantive press release was issued at the end of this mission.

■ On 13 March, the Commissioner published a letter addressed to the French National Assembly regarding a draft law on migration and asylum in which he raised concerns about reduced time limits for filing asylum applications and for lodging complaints against negative first-instance decisions. He also expressed concern about the proposal to increase the maximum duration of administrative detention and urged the National Assembly to reform the provisions on the facilitation of unauthorised entry and residence.

■ On 1 April, the new Commissioner, Dunja Mijatović, took up office. Her first visit was carried out to Albania from 21 to 25 May. In her report, published in September, the Commissioner focused on children's rights, the rights of people with disabilities and access to free legal aid. She welcomed improvements in the protection of children, while noting that violence against children continues to be reported and that many children still live in care institutions with little prospect of leaving before they reach majority age. She noted that improvements to the social care system are necessary to ensure the protection and inclusion of people with disabilities. Issues relating to legal capacity and the risk of statelessness were also addressed in this report.

■ On 15 May, the Commissioner published a letter sent to the Minister for Human Rights and Refugees and the Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, concerning the migration situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of the increased arrivals of refugees and migrants into the country. The Commissioner urged the authorities to provide adequate reception facilities and access to fair and effective asylum procedures.

**Afghan refugees eat inside their tent at a makeshift camp outside of the Moria reception and identification centre (Lesbos, 27 June 2018)**



From 11 to 15 June Commissioner Mijatović carried out a visit to Estonia where she focused on gender equality and women's rights, and the human rights of older people. In her report, which was published in September, she expressed concern regarding violence against women and the gender pay gap. She also raised the issue of Estonia's rapidly ageing population and urged the authorities to ensure that older people can live in dignity and enjoy their human rights.

On 14 June, the Commissioner published a letter addressed to the Secretary of State for Migration and Asylum of Belgium, in which she raised concerns about the possibility that migrant families with children may be detained in newly built closed detention units near Brussels airport. She stressed that children should not be detained on the grounds of their parents' immigration status and called on the authorities to find alternatives to detention for families with children.

On 17 July, the Commissioner published a letter she addressed to the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, regarding the situation of Oyub Titiev, a leading member of the Memorial Human Rights Centre who is detained in the Chechen Republic and under prosecution. She underlined Mr Titiev's important work in defending human rights in the North Caucasus and called for his immediate release.

On the same day, she published the written observations submitted to the European Court of Human Rights as a third party on a case concerning a person with intellectual disabilities whose right to vote had been withdrawn by a court in Spain.

On 21 August, the Commissioner published letters addressed to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and of Ukraine concerning the situation of several individuals who have been detained or imprisoned since 2014 in the respective countries. She called on the authorities of both countries to fully meet the needs of these individuals and prevent any further deterioration of their situation.

On 4 September, the Commissioner published her exchange of letters with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, focusing on the need to initiate a judge-led inquiry into detainee mistreatment and renditions following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

Grand Chamber hearing at the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *N.D. and N.T. v. Spain* – Intervention of **Dunja Mijatović**, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 28 March 2018)



■ The Commissioner carried out a visit to Armenia from 15 to 20 September, focusing on women’s rights, gender equality and domestic violence, the human rights of certain disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and questions related to accountability for past human rights violations. She visited the only shelter for victims of domestic violence in the country, and a children’s care home in Yerevan.

■ On 26 September, the Commissioner took part in a hearing before the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *N.D. and N.T. v. Spain* in relation to two complaints concerning alleged summary returns of migrants from the Spanish city of Melilla to Morocco.

■ On 4 October, the Commissioner published written observations submitted to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Emin Huseynov v. Azerbaijan*, relating to the deprivation of nationality of the applicant as a measure of retaliation for his legitimate human rights activity.

■ The following day, the Commissioner published a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Croatia in which she raised her concerns about allegations of collective expulsions of migrants from Croatia. She called on the authorities to duly investigate all recorded cases and allegations of collective expulsions and violence against migrants.

■ The Commissioner conducted a contact mission to Turkey from 15 to 19 October to initiate a dialogue with the Turkish authorities and civil society on a number of human rights issues of interest to the Commissioner.

■ In November Commissioner Mijatović published the report of the visit she carried out to Greece in June. The report focused on the human rights of migrants and on the impact of the austerity measures on the rights to health and to education. While welcoming the efforts made by the Greek population to welcome migrants, she noted that reception conditions need to be improved and that Greece is now a country of destination and not just transit. She also urged the authorities to step up their efforts to mitigate the effects of the austerity packages, particularly on vulnerable people such as children and people with disabilities.

■ The Commissioner carried out a visit to Romania from 12 to 16 November, focusing on the human rights of people with disabilities and violence against women. She also held discussions with the authorities on the reform of the judicial system in Romania and on the protection of journalists’ rights.

■ On 23 November, the Commissioner published a letter addressed to the Presidents of the Congress and the Senate of Spain about the review of the 2015 Law on Citizens’ Safety in which she highlighted her concerns about the reported negative impact the application of this law has had on the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.



**Follow-up visit to Serbia by Nils Muiznieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, up to 1 April 2018**  
(Belgrade, 22 February 2018)

■ On 20 December, Commissioner Mijatović published a letter addressed to the Scottish Minister for Children and Young People, on the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill, in which she urged the Scottish Government to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 14 at least, rather than 12 as proposed in the bill.

■ In her thematic work in 2018, Commissioner Mijatović covered a wide range of human rights themes, paying particular attention to the human rights of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees; media freedom and the safety of journalists; and women's rights. She also highlighted the human rights of people with disabilities; children's rights; and the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) people while also focusing on transitional justice and on the protection of human rights in the use of artificial intelligence.

■ Commissioner Mijatović also devoted considerable attention to the situation of human rights defenders in her country and thematic work in 2018. She intervened in several cases where the safety of human rights defenders was at risk and also raised various issues relating to the need to ensure a safe and enabling environment for the activities of NGOs in several countries.

■ Several editorials, human rights comments, speeches and statements were published addressing a wide range of issues. The Commissioner's work was further highlighted through intense activity on social media, in particular through the Twitter account (@CommissionerHR) and Facebook page.



Conference entitled "Situation of NGOs in the member states of the Council of Europe" – **Anna Rurka**, President of the Conference of INGOs (Strasbourg, 26 January 2018)



Conference of INGOs debate, "Democracy and the people" (Strasbourg, 19 September 2018)



# Conference of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs)

More can be found on [www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/home](http://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/home)  
Twitter: @CoE\_NGO – Facebook: @CONFINGO

**President of the Conference of INGOs: Anna Rurka (Poland)**

## CIVIL SOCIETY'S VOICE IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In 2018, the conference elected its leadership for the 2018-2021 mandate, including re-electing its president, Ms Anna Rurka, for a second term, and adopted a new action plan reflecting the most urgent concerns of civil society. The conference adopted a resolution on the use of the term “droits humains” (human rights) instead of “droits de l’homme” within the Conference of INGOs.

In the interest of strengthening its effectiveness, ethical framework and accountability to its members and partners, the conference started a reform process as part of an overall reflection on the current structure of the conference and the necessity to adapt it to the changing environment and priorities of the Organisation while ensuring that the concerns of civil society in Europe continue to be heard at the Council of Europe. The adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe, was particularly welcomed. The conference contributed actively to the drafting process led by the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and intends to contribute substantively to the implementation and follow-up of this recommendation.

As in previous years, the conference was active during the World Forum for Democracy and sponsored an interactive lab on the question of “Will closing the gender gap in the economy lead to greater political equality?”, bringing female entrepreneurs and innovators together to look at the effects of women’s economic empowerment and identify the conditions for female employees to thrive.

## VOICE OF SOLIDARITY WITH EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY

The troubling trend towards increased restrictions, obstacles and threats towards civil society organisations, NGOs and human rights defenders across Europe continued in 2018. Delegations from the conference visited “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”,<sup>7</sup> the United Kingdom and Romania, the latter as a follow-up visit to the first visit conducted in 2016. On each visit the delegation met with civil society representatives and public authorities. The visits provided an opportunity to identify good practices in civil participation and public support for NGOs as well as to highlight the difficulties and challenges being faced by civil society, notably under restrictive or ambiguous legislation.

The year 2018 saw a renewal in the membership and the terms of reference of the Expert Council on NGO Law. This body of the conference, which looks at specific aspects of NGO legislation and its implementation that pose problems of conformity with international standards, produced an opinion on the draft amendments to the Serbian law on access to information of public utility, an analysis entitled “International Standards Relating to Reporting and Disclosure Requirements for Non-Governmental Organizations” and a “Compendium of Council of Europe practice relating to the right to freedom of association and the position of non-governmental organisations”.

A debate entitled “Democracy & The People” was held on 19 September 2018 to mark the International Day of Democracy. Academics, activists, civil servants and politicians discussed ways and means for ensuring that liberal democracy lives up to our expectations, how to defend democracy while holding institutions accountable and how to renew the faith of citizens in their institutions and in liberal democracy itself.

7. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.



**Jean-Claude Juncker**, President of the European Commission, and **Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 25 June 2018)

Visit from **Jamie D. McCourt**, United States Ambassador to France, to **Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, following the signature of a voluntary contribution to **Cybercrime@Octopus** (Strasbourg, 25 September 2018)



**Roman Vassilenko**, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and **Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 26 June 2018)

# External relations

www.coe.int/DER

## POLICY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TOWARDS NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

The policy towards neighbouring regions aims at developing a common legal space based on Council of Europe values and instruments in order to promote stability and democratic security in Europe and its neighbouring regions. The policy was carried out in close co-operation with the European Union. The Neighbourhood Partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia, the Council of Europe's two main partners, were renewed for the period 2018-2021. These partnerships combine and strengthen the two pillars of the policy – political dialogue and co-operation activities. Co-operation continued with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Palestine<sup>8</sup> through the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities. Multifaceted co-operation has also further developed with Israel, and regional activities and ad hoc co-operation (with Egypt and Libya, for example) also continued.

## RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE OSCE

### European Union

Close co-operation is needed more than ever to better address increasing challenges, preserve the coherence and efficiency of the European human rights system and combat the growing threats to democratic institutions and the rule of law. Accordingly, the strategic partnership with the EU was further strengthened through its three pillars – political dialogue, legal co-operation and co-operation projects. High-level dialogue was particularly intensive throughout 2018 to address the main challenges, notably issues related to the rule of law. As in previous years, a substantial part of joint activities was carried out through joint programmes in Council of Europe member states and in neighbouring regions. The Council of Europe Liaison Office in Brussels and the Delegation of the EU to the Council of Europe further facilitated the reinforcement of the co-operation described above.

8. This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member states on this issue.

### United Nations

On 26 November, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus Resolution A/RES/73/15, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", which illustrates the increased co-operation between the two organisations in many areas. The Council of Europe also examined the issue of the UN General Assembly draft resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, especially during an exchange of views with the UN with the participation of experts from capitals and during meetings of the Group of Rapporteurs of the Ministers' Deputies on Human Rights. The resolution was adopted by the General Assembly in December. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review, the status of women and migration were other areas of important co-operation. The co-operation between the two organisations also continued to increase thanks to the Council of Europe Liaison Offices in Geneva and Vienna.

### OSCE

Relations with the OSCE focused on a broad spectrum of human dimension activities "in the field", at intergovernmental and parliamentary level or between institutions and specialist bodies. The Council of Europe Liaison Offices in Vienna and Warsaw facilitated the co-operation. High-level dialogue was further developed, in particular between the two secretaries general.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

The Council of Europe maintained regular contact and relations with other organisations active in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, such as La Francophonie, the Order of Malta and International IDEA. Active preferential relations with observer states (the Holy See, Canada, Japan, Mexico and the USA) were complemented by relations with more than 70 non-member states and focused on fields where the Council of Europe's *acquis* presents a global comparative advantage.



**Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe,  
**Andrej Plenković**, Prime Minister of Croatia,  
**Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General,  
**Leyla Kayacik**, Director of Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe,  
**Bjorn Berge**, Secretary to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and  
**Alexandre Guessel**, Director of Political Affairs at the Council of Europe  
(Strasbourg, 6 February 2018)

# Political advice

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**F**ollowing an in-country Secretariat visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 2018, a regular report on the country's compliance with its obligations and commitments towards the Organisation covering the period from May 2016 to May 2018 was presented to the Committee of Ministers, who took a related decision on the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of the report.

■ The regular 17th and 18th consolidated reports of the Secretary General on the conflict in Georgia were presented to, and debated by, the Committee of Ministers on two occasions, in April and November 2018. As on previous occasions, the reports took stock of the situation in Georgia following the August 2008 conflict, provided information on the related activities of the Council of Europe and proposed further action for the Organisation in terms of confidence-building measures. The Ministers' Deputies took a decision on the Council of Europe and the conflict in Georgia in May 2018 as a follow-up to the presentation of the 17th consolidated report.

■ Regarding the functioning of the Information Point in Minsk, the project continued working actively to consolidate the action and visibility of the Organisation in the country through the organisation and support of more than 40 Council of Europe-related events in Minsk and in some of the country's regions (lectures, round tables, visits and conferences).

■ Some of the Council of Europe events in 2018 that were co-organised and supported by the Information Point in Minsk obtained high visibility in the country, in particular the "25th anniversary of Belarusian membership of the European Cultural Convention", a round table entitled "Legal aspects of death penalty abolition", a seminar entitled "Civic control over institutions of the penal correction system" and a series of Council of Europe activities and visits related to the promotion of local democracy and self-government.

■ The Directorate of Political Advice (DPA) continued to implement confidence-building measures (CBMs) in post-conflict, frozen or protracted conflict zones. In 2018, this programme supported the dissemination of Council of Europe standards and contributed

to dialogue and capacity building of professionals in the affected regions. The main beneficiaries of the programme were representatives from both banks of the River Nistru/Dniester in the Republic of Moldova, representatives from Tbilisi and Sukhumi and, to a limited extent, from other locations in the South Caucasus area, and different local officials and population groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

■ Significant progress was achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the programme has focused in particular on strengthening the "Women for Bosnia" platform, a network of women change-makers established in the framework of the CBM programme, with a view to enhancing advocacy, lobbying and other practical activities, especially at a local level, to address issues concerning women through a cross-entity approach intended to foster reconciliation. The partnership with the established network of municipalities on both sides of the entity-boundary line has also intensified with a view to enhancing the dialogue between young people and municipal authorities at a local level. Concerning the Tbilisi-Sukhumi dialogue, the CBM programme evolved in terms of the diversity of thematic issues, such as launching a new strand of activities involving doctors and health professionals in the field of infectious diseases, through a co-operation with the Embassy of France in Tbilisi. At the same time, follow-up to previous initiatives was maintained. Relevant activities included the development of a second phase of the work on archive materials (following a successful first publication), drug-prevention capacity building (including the launch of a digital workspace), architectural heritage conservation, simultaneous interpretation from/to the Abkhaz language and the fight against violence against women.

■ Concerning the Chisinau-Tiraspol dialogue, activities focused on the areas of education, including higher education. Significantly, activities were carried out in several locations, notably in the field of the media, which involved young journalists from locations around the South Caucasus. Also, in the field of youth, young people from various locations, including Tbilisi, Sukhumi, Tskhinvali, Chisinau and Tiraspol, joined the Youth Peace Camp 2018.



**Joint meeting OSCE/MONEYVAL –**  
Workshop for judges and prosecutors  
“Experiences, challenges and best practices”  
(Strasbourg, 26 March 2018)

**Launch of the inter-agency working group  
on the effectiveness of investigations  
in Ukraine (Kyiv, 20 June 2018)**



# Human rights and the rule of law

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## HUMAN RIGHTS, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

**F**urther progress in execution was achieved, in many cases linked with long-standing structural problems like the lack of effective criminal investigations into allegations of ill-treatment by security forces, the excessive length of pretrial detention and judicial proceedings, and inhuman prison conditions. Moreover, numerous reforms touched on matters relating to the protection of rights in detention and private and family life, including, inter alia, new improved rules for the establishment of paternity, efforts to prevent the international abduction of children and the legal recognition of transgender people.

Specific reforms included the setting up of a compensation mechanism for property nationalised under the former communist regime in Albania; Slovenia's repayment mechanism for "old" foreign currency savings deposited in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; a settlement scheme in Croatia to ensure payment of domestic judgments awarding war damages; improved guarantees against unlawful or unnecessary detention in the Republic of Moldova; improved protection of journalistic sources in the Netherlands; improved guarantees for freedom of assembly in Poland; improved fairness of proceedings before commercial courts in Russia; the abolishment of military courts in Turkey; and the greatly improved independence of courts in Ukraine.

### Human rights national implementation

The Council of Europe continued to support member states in ensuring effective and coherent implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights at national level. Co-operation projects continued to facilitate the execution of the Court's judgments and alignment of national laws and practices with Council of Europe standards, notably through supporting criminal justice reforms, strengthening national human rights mechanisms and ensuring a harmonised application of European standards in national jurisdictions in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia",<sup>9</sup> the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and Kosovo.<sup>10</sup> Activities were also carried out to promote human rights in Belarus.

9. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.

10. All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.



**Launch of the new criminal justice reform programme in Moldova**  
(Chişinău, 26 April 2018)



Noteworthy achievements include the start of operation of the State Bureau of Investigations in Ukraine and first-of-its-kind training on human rights for military officers in Armenia. Legal amendments in line with European standards were adopted in Armenia, Georgia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Ukraine. In Azerbaijan and Turkey, sustainable judicial training structures were strengthened, leading to in-depth human rights training of over 3 000 judges and prosecutors.

In 2018, the Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals Programme (HELP) launched new courses on issues such as the Rights of Refugee and Migrant Children, Women’s Access to Justice and Human Rights in Sports. The number of HELP users continued to grow to reach 29 000 (compared to 6 000 in 2014). Legal professionals improved their capacities and skills after successfully completing HELP courses organised with judiciary schools and bar associations, largely thanks to targeted HELP projects in the EU, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the Western Balkans. Work with law faculties was also intensified.

## Development and promotion of human rights

In November, the Ministers’ Deputies adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe. This instrument was prepared by the CDDH, which also organised in November a workshop on the protection and promotion of the civil society space, under the aegis of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.

## International co-operation

The Council of Europe’s Raoul Wallenberg Prize was awarded in 2018 to the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) for its outstanding contribution to raising awareness of the human rights situation of the Roma people.<sup>11</sup> The ERRC has successfully challenged discrimination, anti-Roma racism and rights abuses of Roma through innovative litigation, evidence-based research and policy development. The prize was created on the initiative of the Swedish Government and the Hungarian Parliament in 2012 in order to keep the memory of Raoul Wallenberg’s achievements alive.

The relation with the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has been marked by more intense co-operation in both long-standing and new areas. A milestone was the Fundamental Rights Forum, which was an opportunity to demonstrate the strong and sustainable co-operation between the Council of Europe and the FRA. The Council of Europe actively contributed to the working groups and open sessions, on topics such as social rights, hate speech, human rights defenders, and human rights and business. The Council of Europe’s contribution to the protection of human rights and the rule of law in Europe was highlighted in the chair’s statement at the end of the forum.

11. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote not a definition of Roma and/or Traveller.



European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, plenary meeting (Strasbourg, 6 November 2018)

## SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

### Prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment (CPT)

■ In 2018, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) carried out eight periodic visits (Albania, Andorra, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Norway, Romania and Slovakia) and 10 ad hoc visits (Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom). This was the first year that the CPT carried out more ad hoc than periodic visits, having decided to reduce the number of periodic visits per year to leave more room for visits required by the circumstances.

■ In addition to these visits, the CPT held high-level talks with the authorities in Azerbaijan to discuss the action taken by the government to address the recommendations of the most recent CPT visit reports concerning Azerbaijan. Moreover, visits to Turkey, the Russian Federation and Hungary were good opportunities to also discuss long-standing issues with the authorities concerned.

■ At the request of the national authorities concerned, 22 visit reports and government responses were made public. The CPT welcomed the decision by the Azerbaijani authorities to publish the seven reports concerning their country together with the accompanying responses. In its Annual General Report, the CPT published its standards on complaints mechanisms in all places of detention. The CPT's secretariat also issued two factsheets: on women in prison and on the transport of detainees.

■ At their plenary meetings of June and July 2018, the United Nations Sub-committee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT) and the CPT decided to reinforce complementarity by improving the flow of information between the two bodies, avoiding duplication and participating jointly in follow-up activities.

### Social rights

■ The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) pursued its monitoring work in 2018 under the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35, the Charter) with significant achievements. Some member states adopted prompt measures to remedy shortcomings identified in areas such as the treatment and detention of unaccompanied migrant children, decent housing or the requirement of sterilisation for transgender people to have their gender reassignment formally registered. Other member states have taken measures to address poverty, increase the minimum wage or seek to close the gender pay gap. There has been increasing reliance on the Charter and the case law of the ECSR by domestic courts, including in respect of limits to compensation for unfair dismissal and, in one notable case, raising unemployment benefits above the poverty threshold.



**HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals Programme) annual conference 2018**  
(Strasbourg, 21 June 2018)

■ In June, the CDDH adopted an analysis of the legal framework of the Council of Europe for the protection of social rights in Europe with a view to preparing a further report identifying good practices and making proposals with the aim of improving the implementation of social rights, particularly those protected under the (Revised) European Social Charter (ETS No. 163).

### Bioethics

■ The year 2018 saw the development and launch of the first HELP course on key human rights principles in biomedicine. The course, intended for legal and medical professionals, is tailored to meet the specific needs of both professional groups, inter alia, by introducing a glossary of the relevant scientific and legal terms. The curriculum covers binding legal instruments, notably the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (ETS No. 164, Oviedo Convention) and its additional protocols and the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the non-binding instruments adopted by the Committee on Bioethics, and will be available as a self-learning tool and for tutored courses in English, French and a variety of other languages, including Armenian, German, Italian, Romanian, Russian and Spanish.

■ Belarus continued to benefit from activities for the promotion and protection of human rights in biomedicine, including the provision of an expert legal opinion on the new draft law on transplantation of organs and tissues of human origin.

### Freedom of expression

■ Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 March. Its aim is to ensure media pluralism in the digitised media environment. Two studies on electoral communication and media coverage of elections were also published, one focusing on gender equality and the other on the use of the internet in electoral campaigns.

■ The process for preparing standard-setting instruments aiming to empower quality journalistic production and consumption thereof was launched. A draft Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the financial sustainability of quality journalism in the digital age was finalised. Work is also under way into quality journalism, looking at ways to rebuild and maintain the trust of the audience through ethics and quality, as well as providing media literacy education and training fit for the digital age.

### Internet freedom and governance

■ Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2 on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 March. An Expert Study on the human rights dimensions of automated data-processing techniques and possible regulatory implications was also published.



The Council of Europe's Secretary General, **Thorbjørn Jagland** and **Oliver Süme**, president of the world's largest internet service providers association EuroISPA, signed collaboration agreements in the form of an exchange of letters (Strasbourg, 23 May 2018)

■ On 23 May 2018, the Council of Europe organised a meeting with leading technology firms and associations with whom, in November 2017, the Secretary General had exchanged letters to enhance their engagement in promoting an open and safe online environment. This first exchange of views between the Committee of Ministers and private-sector representatives allowed for a discussion about closer co-operation opportunities on cyber-security, data protection, child protection and content moderation on social media.

■ The process of preparing standard-setting instruments with respect to the human rights dimensions of automated data processing and different forms of artificial intelligence was launched. A draft Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the manipulative capabilities of algorithmic processes was published in November, and preparations are under way for a draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the human rights impacts of algorithmic systems and for a draft study of the implications of advanced digital technologies (including artificial intelligence (AI) systems) for the concept of responsibility within a human rights framework.

## Media and internet co-operation activities

■ A project in South-East Europe helped strengthen the capacity of legal professionals to apply the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on Article 10 of the Convention at the national level. This resulted in the first domestic judgments directly quoting and applying the case law on Article 10. Regional exchanges among media regulatory authorities were reinforced in thematic areas such as hate speech, protection of minors and media literacy.

■ The Azerbaijan Press Council adopted amendments to its Code of Professional Ethics and a new Audiovisual Code in Moldova was created with Council of Europe support. A training centre opened on the premises of the public-service broadcaster TeleRadioMoldova to provide on-the-job training to some 100 media professionals. The documentary *Soroca's Great Theatre*, produced by TeleRadioMoldova, won the prestigious ADAMI Media Prize for Cultural Diversity in Eastern Europe.

■ Ukraine signed the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS No. 205, Tromsø Convention) in April. After ratification, Ukraine will become the 10th country to join the convention, which will then enter into force.



**GRECO High-level Conference on Strengthening Transparency and Accountability to Ensure Integrity – United against Corruption** (Šibenik, 15 October 2018)

## Data protection

■ The year 2018 was an outstanding one in data protection. In particular, the modernised Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Processing of Personal Data (ETS No. 108, “Convention 108 +”) was adopted on 18 May and the signatory countries already number 23. Meanwhile, Convention 108 pursued its globalisation and has now 53 parties, the newest being Cabo Verde and Mexico. Furthermore, data-protection principles were actively promoted in various parts of the world (notably Brazil, Mexico, India and Uruguay) and in several global events and forums (IGF, ICANN, UN and the 40th International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners).

■ A new edition of the handbook on European data-protection law was launched on 25 May together with the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, covering Convention 108+ and the new data-protection legal framework of the European Union, as well as the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

■ Belarus, Kenya and Nigeria benefited from support for the development of data-protection legislation. Morocco and other countries in the southern Mediterranean region received support for enhanced implementation of the right to data protection. Media professionals in Albania were trained to respect privacy in the exercise of their work.

## ACTION AGAINST CRIME

### Fight against terrorism and criminal law

■ In July, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Strategy for 2018-2022. The strategy is built around the concept of the “three Ps”: prevent, prosecute and protect.

■ The recommendation on terrorists acting alone (CM/Rec(2018)6) contains elements on criminal law measures, social cohesion and inclusive education, narratives to counter terrorist propaganda, the role of civil society, the internet and a chapter on safeguards. The recommendation will be periodically reviewed and updated.

### Prison and police co-operation

■ Among the many achievements in police and prison reform in Europe with Council of Europe support, the refurbishment and opening of a visitor’s room in the second largest prison in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”,<sup>12</sup> in Štip, is worthy of particular mention. This new room allows inmates to spend time with their visiting children, thus improving the protection of the emotional, psychological and social development of children. This work was carried out together with local communities and their administration.

12. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.

**MONEYVAL** – 57th plenary meeting of the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (Strasbourg, 5 December 2018)



### Fight against money laundering

■ In March, the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) organised a workshop for prosecutors and judges, together with the Financial Action Task Force and the OSCE. Bringing together in Strasbourg 100 participants from 43 different states and territories across Europe and Central Asia, it provided a platform for sharing experiences, challenges and best practices for investigating and prosecuting money laundering and terrorist financing, and depriving criminals of their proceeds.

### Fight against corruption

■ The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) adopted nearly 50 evaluation and compliance reports. These reports largely focused on the prevention of corruption of MPs, judges and prosecutors. GRECO also adopted a number of evaluation reports under its new fifth evaluation round on preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law-enforcement agencies.

■ In certain countries, new legislative initiatives reversed reforms previously undertaken to comply with GRECO's recommendations, leading GRECO to either reassess the new legislation or remind the authorities in the countries concerned of the relevant GRECO recommendations through urgent ad hoc evaluations.

### Co-operation in the fight against economic crime

■ Technical co-operation against corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing continued to increase, with almost 80% of funding for the work coming from external sources. In 2018, 22 countries, both members and non-members, co-operated with the Council of Europe. The main results are the alignment of primary and secondary legislation, improved international co-operation in criminal matters and better prevention policies.

■ Over the last few years, efforts to support reform and the evolution of crime point to a need for standards where lacunae exist or for more specific guidelines and tools for the existing standards' implementation. Some of the areas identified in 2018 were conflict of interest; asset declarations, including international exchange of information in non-criminal matters; financial investigations; beneficial ownership; access to data collected on tax issues; asset forfeiture; and terrorist financing.

### Cybercrime

■ By early 2018, more than 140 states had used the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185, Budapest Convention) as a source of domestic cybercrime legislation and the substantive criminal legislation of about 50% of UN member states was broadly in line with this treaty. The number of parties to the convention increased to 62 with Argentina, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Ghana, Morocco, Paraguay and Philippines acceding in 2018. The number of Parties to the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems (ETS No. 189) increased to 31 states.



**The Pompidou Group’s 17th Ministerial Conference entitled “Sustainable drug policies respectful of human rights”**  
(Stavanger, 27 November 2018)

■ The effective application of the Budapest Convention is supported by the Cybercrime Convention Committee (T-CY) representing the parties to the Budapest Convention. The primary focus of the T-CY was the negotiation of a Second Additional Protocol on enhanced international co-operation and access to evidence on cloud servers. This protocol will provide specific solutions regarding effective mutual legal assistance, direct co-operation with service providers in other jurisdictions, the rules on existing practices for extending trans-border searches, and safeguards that include data-protection requirements. In addition, the T-CY finalised a mapping study on cyber violence.

■ The Budapest Convention and the T-CY are backed by capacity-building activities through the Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe (C-PROC) in Bucharest. Some 220 activities were carried out in 2018 in all regions of the world.

### Drug use and illicit trafficking

■ The Pompidou Group finalised a successful four-year work cycle under the Norwegian Presidency and set the main priorities for its future action at its 17th Ministerial Conference (Stavanger, 27-28 November 2018). The conference approved a next work programme (2019-2022) on a human rights-based approach to drug policy, elected the new presidency (Portugal) and vice-presidency (Poland) and adopted the “Stavanger Declaration”, which sets the Pompidou Group on the path of a statutory revision process in order to better address current challenges related to drug policy.

■ In 2018, the Pompidou Group provided scientifically informed input to the debate on access to opioid agonist medications for the treatment of opioid dependency syndrome and on tackling post-traumatic symptoms and related substance-use disorders. It also implemented an online self-evaluation test addressing the immediate need for internet-based drug demand reduction interventions in South-East Europe and contributed to filling the knowledge gap on drug policy evaluation by training around 50 national drug policy managers on the topic. Pompidou Group activities in the Republic of Moldova contributed to the inclusion of the therapeutic community method in the legislation as a pertinent tool for combating drug dependence in prisons, and in Ukraine to the preparatory work on the introduction of opioid maintenance treatment in prisons.

## JUSTICE AND LEGAL CO-OPERATION

### Venice Commission

■ The Venice Commission analysed the constitutional arrangements and separation of powers in Malta and found that the power of the prime minister widely overshadowed other government bodies.

■ The Commission finalised its work on the constitutional reform of Georgia, welcoming the changes towards a proportional election system while regretting its delayed entry into force.



**Launch of the South III Program “Ensure the sustainability of democratic governance and of human rights in the southern Mediterranean”, Gianni Buquicchio, President of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) (Strasbourg, 18 September 2018)**

■ The Commission scrutinised (draft) legislation pertaining to freedoms of association, assembly and conscience in Armenia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, as well as draft provisions on equality and anti-discrimination in Malta and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”<sup>13</sup>

■ Romania’s legislative reforms in the field of the judiciary and criminal justice were reviewed and criticised by the Venice Commission on the grounds that they could adversely affect the efficiency and quality of the judiciary and in particular of the criminal justice system.

■ The Commission recommended improvements to the legislation on the judiciary and the prosecution services in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. Serbia followed the commission’s recommendations on constitutional reform with regard to the judiciary.

■ In the field of elections and political parties, the Commission analysed (draft) legislation in Albania, Kosovo,<sup>14</sup> the Republic of Moldova, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. The Commission supported a comprehensive electoral reform in Ukraine by organising four rounds of regional public discussions on the draft election code in more than 25 cities.

■ The Commission co-organised in Oslo, Norway, the 15th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies on security in elections. Two UniDem Med Campus seminars for high-level civil servants in the southern Mediterranean region also took place in Rabat, Morocco, and Tunis, Tunisia. The sixth intercultural workshop on democracy was held in Tunis on the role and place of independent bodies in a democratic state.

■ In 2018 the membership of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice (WCCJ), initiated and managed by the commission, increased to 114 courts.

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14. All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.





**Georg Stawa**, President of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) from 2015 to 2018 and **Ramin Gurbanov** (elected president in December 2018), at the celebration for the 15th anniversary of the CEPEJ (Strasbourg, 27 June 2018)

## Legal co-operation

■ The European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) approved draft guidelines on electronic evidence in civil and administrative proceedings, which have been submitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption in 2019.

■ A revised version of the Council of Europe handbook “The Administration and You”, first published in 1996, was published.

■ A report on the review of the follow-up action taken by member states to the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)11 on principles concerning continuing powers of attorney and advance directives for incapacity was also published.

■ The CDCJ agreed to undertake a preliminary review of protocols and procedures used by member states to determine and resolve cases of statelessness, in particular of migrant children.

## Co-operation projects

■ Support was provided to national authorities and judicial bodies of six member states (Armenia, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”<sup>15</sup> and Ukraine), as well as Belarus and the Republic of Kazakhstan to support their reforms in the justice sector.

■ In Kazakhstan, for example, a four-year programme was completed on supporting national improvements in the quality and efficiency of the justice system, particularly with reference to criminal law and procedure (the prosecution service, rights of victims, mediation) and monitoring conditions of detention.

15. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.

## Independence and efficiency of justice

■ Some 45 member states and two European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) observer states were provided with detailed and comparative analysis of the functioning of their judicial systems, to guide their reforms, through the report published by the CEPEJ and widely disseminated to policy makers, justice professionals and the public. The European Commission was provided by the CEPEJ with information on 26 states, enabling it to prepare its “Justice Scoreboard”. Recommendations were made to improve the system of judicial data collection in Andorra, Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

■ The first “European Ethical Charter on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in judicial systems and their environment” was adopted to steer the ongoing debate on rapid and extensive IT developments within the judiciary. Courts were provided with a new guide on courts’ and public prosecution services’ communication with the public and the media. SATURN tools for strengthening the efficiency of judicial time management were updated (guidelines for judicial time management and a study on the length of court proceedings in the member states based on the Court’s case law). A Mediation Development Toolkit was also developed.



**Tomáš Boček**, Special Representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees, visiting a reception and detention centre for migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar, 26 July 2018)



**Tomáš Boček**, Special Representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees, conducting a fact-finding mission to Spain (Melilla, 20 March 2018)

■ The tools and the methodology of the CEPEJ have been used to guide judicial reforms, in particular through CEPEJ co-operation programmes (in Albania, Latvia, Slovakia, Kosovo,<sup>16</sup> Morocco and Tunisia).

■ European standards on preventing corruption among judges, as well as on the independence, accountability and ethics of prosecutors, were developed through the opinions of the CCJE No. 21 (2018) and of the CCPE No. 13 (2018). The CCJE (Consultative Council of European Judges) and the CCPE (Consultative Council of European Prosecutors) contributed to the implementation of the Council of Europe’s plan of action on strengthening judicial independence and impartiality. The situation of the status of judges in Poland and Montenegro was assessed in particular by the CCJE, and the proposed amendments to the Constitution of Serbia regarding the organisation of judicial power were examined by the CCJE and the CCPE.

## THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEES

■ The Special Representative published reports on his fact-finding missions to Bulgaria and to Spain (April and September) in which he assessed the situation of migrants and refugees and made concrete recommendations on how the Council of Europe can offer assistance to tackle identified challenges.

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■ At the request of the Minister of Interior of Montenegro, the Special Representative delivered in May an expert opinion on the law on foreigners, which focused on its compliance with the values and standards of the Council of Europe.

■ The Special Representative also enhanced co-operation with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) by identifying areas where CEB funding could promote the Organisation’s values and strategic priorities outlined in the action plan on protecting refugee and migrant children and in the recommendations contained in the Special Representative’s country reports. In this connection, the Special Representative participated in the signing of agreements funding a reception/transit facility in Ušivak, healthcare assistance in Melilla and education and refugee integration in Nuremberg, Germany.

■ The Special Representative contributed to the development of a HELP course on refugee and migrant children. This course was created in response to the Special Representative’s recommendation concerning the need for ongoing training for legal professionals dealing with asylum issues. In November, he launched the course with HELP in Spain.



**World Forum for Democracy, opening session**  
(Strasbourg, 19 November 2018)



**Thorbjørn Jagland**,  
Secretary General of the  
Council of Europe, and  
**Teresa Omondi-Adeitan**,  
Executive Director of the  
Federation of Women  
Lawyers (FIDA), Kenya. Her  
initiative, "Self-Representation  
of Women in Kenyan  
Courts", received the 2018  
Democracy Innovation Award  
(Strasbourg, 21 November 2018)

# Democracy

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## GOVERNANCE, EQUALITY, HUMAN DIGNITY

### Good governance

The Committee of Ministers adopted the revised recommendation on the participation of citizens in local public life (CM/Rec(2018)4) while the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) completed the revision of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation No. R (98) 12 on the supervision of local authorities' action and – following up on the Secretary General's *Reports on the state of democracy, human rights and rule of law* – the handbook of good practice on public ethics. The CDDG also assisted seven member states with government reforms through its peer review and rapid response service mechanisms.

■ The Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform supported public administration and decentralisation reforms in 25 member states. Noteworthy results were achieved also in implementing the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance, contributing both to the promotion of a common vision of Good Governance in Europe and to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

### Civil society

■ Promoting an enabling environment for NGOs and the active participation of civil society in democratic decision making continued to be priorities of the work for the Civil Society division. These priorities were strengthened by the adoption of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe. Following the end of a 30-month joint programme, "Civil Society Dialogue in Azerbaijan", public authorities and NGOs can now benefit from a handbook on civil participation and good governance. In Belarus a 12-month project was carried out in support of an improved public consultation



Spanish singer **Luz Casal** performs at the opening session of the World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 19 November 2018)

process for new legislation and systematic impact assessments. A pilot project in Ukraine on promoting civil participation in democratic decision making in Kyiv was successfully completed.

### Electoral assistance

■ The main activities of electoral assistance were concentrated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Council of Europe has supported a campaign to promote the participation of women, and in the Republic of Moldova, with a series of activities on the awareness of voters.

■ Special attention has also been given to the implications of artificial intelligence in electoral processes, in particular during electoral campaigns.



Signature by Ambassador **Miroslav Papa**, Permanent Representative of Croatia, of the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs, in the presence of **Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 29 November 2018)

■ In Georgia, emphasis was placed on enhancing gender balance and encouraging female voters and candidates. Finally, following the study visit of the newly appointed Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine to the Council of Europe, an assistance programme was drawn up ahead of the presidential elections in March 2019 and the parliamentary elections in October 2019 concerning voter awareness and the voting rights of IDPs.

### World Forum for Democracy

■ At the 7th edition of the World Forum for Democracy (19-21 November 2018), around 2 000 participants (including over 400 from the Council of Europe's Schools of Political Studies) debated "Gender Equality: Whose Battle?", covering topics such as gender equality, gender-based violence and the multilateral dimension of women's rights. It featured talks by visiting dignitaries (including the Spanish Minister of Justice Dolores Delgado, the French Minister of State for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination, Marlène Schiappa, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Croatia and Finland), presentations on grass-roots initiatives in 13 labs, eight thematic round tables, a storytelling session and artistic events. The conclusions will feed into the future work of the Council of Europe and the forum's partners and a series of articles and videos published by media partner Open Democracy will ensure visibility into 2019.

### Council of Europe Development Bank – (CEB) Partial Agreement

■ The CEB approved 45 projects totalling €3.9 billion. Twenty-five of those projects (€1.66 billion) concern Target Group countries in Central, South-East and Eastern Europe. In 2018, 21.8% of the volume of approved projects was directly or indirectly granted to aid migrants, refugees and displaced persons. The projects also targeted social housing for vulnerable population groups, including migrants and refugees and their families, people with disabilities and the elderly, the construction or modernisation of school and health facilities, the preservation of jobs and the mitigation of the impact of climate change.

■ The CEB's Migrant and Refugee Fund (MRF) continued to support its member countries in ensuring that migrants and refugees who arrive on their territory have access to basic human rights, such as shelter, food and medical aid, as well as personal security. By end of 2018, donors had contributed €28.4 million to the fund. The bank approved 19 projects totalling €22.4 million in nine countries, predominantly along what is known as the Balkan route.

■ The CEB pursued its active role in the Regional Housing Programme (RHP), which aims to provide sustainable housing solutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

■ The CEB continued to provide technical assistance for the preparation of strong social impact projects through different trust accounts, such as the Slovak Inclusive Growth Account, the Norway Trust Account, the Spanish Social Cohesion Account and the Italian Fund for Innovative Projects.



**The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)** (Strasbourg, 10 July 2018)

## Gender equality

■ The new Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023 promotes a holistic, integrated approach to achieving true gender equality. Targeted co-operation projects covered a broad range of countries, including those in the Eastern Partnership and the South Mediterranean, as well as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Lithuania. The HELP course on violence against women and domestic violence is currently available in nine languages. National adaptations have been launched in six countries.

## Trafficking in human beings

■ In 2018, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) carried out 11 country evaluation visits: nine as part of the second round of evaluation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (to Andorra, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, San Marino and Switzerland), one as part of the first evaluation round (to Turkey), and a combined first and second round visit to Liechtenstein. GRETA's 7th General Report focused on human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. GRETA launched the third evaluation round of the convention with a thematic focus on "Access to justice and effective remedies for victims of trafficking in human beings". Co-operation projects linked to GRETA's recommendations were implemented in several member states.

## Violence against women

■ Five more member states of the Council of Europe ratified the Istanbul Convention, bringing the number of states parties to 33. The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) completed its monitoring of Montenegro, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey on the basis of reports submitted both by state authorities and by civil society, state dialogues with government representatives and country visits. The four reports were adopted and published and will be examined by the Committee of the Parties to the Convention in 2019. GREVIO also initiated the evaluation procedure for Finland and France. Preliminary findings and challenges that states parties face in their efforts to implement the Istanbul Convention include, but are not limited to: gaps in legislation, lack of services (including insufficient shelters, regular functioning of phone lines and services for children witnessing violence), limited or no funding, lack of mechanisms to ensure co-ordination among relevant stakeholders, gender-neutral policy documents, measures and laws, the absence of reliable gender disaggregated data and statistics, and insufficient support and protection for victims during legal processes.

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

### European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

■ The (ECRI) published eight reports and eight conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations subject to interim follow-up and organised seven visits. ECRI also published its revised standards for the establishment and functioning of European equality bodies.

## Minorities and minority or regional languages

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■ A 2018 landmark event was the 20th anniversary conference “Minorities and Minority Languages in a Changing Europe” of the Framework Convention and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in June 2018, organised under the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The conference prepared the ground for the ongoing reforms of both instruments, while reaffirming their relevance.

■ In 2018, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) adopted six opinions and carried out seven visits. The Committee of Ministers adopted eight resolutions in the context of the control system of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

■ In relation to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No. 148) six Committee of Experts’ evaluation reports and five Committee of Ministers’ recommendations were adopted. On 28 November, the Committee of Ministers adopted a reform with a view to strengthening the monitoring mechanism of the charter with effect from 1 July 2019.

## Inclusion

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■ A range of country-specific and regional projects have been carried out to reinforce legal frameworks, policies and institutional practice of member states in relation to anti-discrimination, the protection of minorities and equality for LGBTI people. Key achievements include the adoption of a new law on National Councils of National Minorities in Serbia, and support for the adoption of a new framework for the participation of national minorities in policy development in Ukraine. New Legal Gender Recognition legislation based on self-determination has been adopted in Portugal and Luxembourg, and LGBT action plans have been implemented in Portugal and Albania. Building on the legacy of the No Hate Speech Movement, an online compendium of resources has been launched, and a call for future action outlining key measures by public authorities and civil society against hate speech has been published. A new four-year programme has been launched in Georgia to encourage a comprehensive approach to anti-discrimination, including hate speech and hate crime.

■ The Intercultural cities network has included intersectionality in its policy approach and deepened its human rights component. The exponential growth of the network this year (over 130 members), has taken the Council of Europe intercultural integration approach to five continents as an effective way of building community cohesion and fostering equality in diverse societies. The value of this approach is gradually being recognised also by regional and national authorities.

## Roma and Travellers

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■ Implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers<sup>17</sup> (2016-19) continued.

■ Prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination, hate speech and violence against Roma and Travellers (“anti-Gypsyism”) were tackled notably through the promotion of the Committee of Ministers’ recommendation on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe (CM/Rec(2017)10) and through the signature and implementation of the second phase of the European Union–Council of Europe joint programme, “JUSTROM2”.

■ The 6th International Roma Women Conference (2017) was followed up by providing training for potential Roma women candidates at local, national and European elections.

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17. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. This information is by way of an explanatory footnote, and is not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.



**Raoul Wallenberg Prize award ceremony – Speech by Djordje Jovanovic,** director of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC, Budapest), in the presence of **Thorbjørn Jagland,** Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 17 January 2018)

■ Innovative solutions to Roma inclusion at local and regional levels were developed and promoted through EU–Council of Europe joint programmes such as ROMED, ROMACT and ROMACTED.

### Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

■ At their 15th Conference (in Tbilisi, Georgia, 16 October 2018), the Council of Europe ministers responsible for sport adopted a resolution on protecting human rights in sport and another on fighting corruption in sport. EPAS also played a key role in the International Partnership against Corruption in Sport (IPACS) and prepared the recommendation on good governance in sport adopted by the Committee of Ministers in December 2018. In April, EPAS launched the Start to Talk<sup>18</sup> initiative to fight sexual violence against children in sport. The Start to Talk campaigns launched in Spain, Norway, Portugal and the Netherlands involve a broad mobilisation of public authorities and the sport movement.

18. Start to Talk is a follow-up initiative of the joint projects Pro Safe Sport and Pro Safe Sport+. It is a call to action to public authorities and the sports movement to take the necessary prevention and protection measures to stop child sexual abuse. By joining this call, governments, sports clubs, associations and federations, as well as athletes and coaches, pledge to take concrete measures to prevent and respond to abuse. “Start to Talk” is about adults breaking the silence and lending children a voice.

### Children’s Rights

■ The Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) has adopted guiding principles and guidelines for an effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in migration. A handbook was issued for frontline professionals on how to convey child-friendly information to children in migration.

■ Human Rights standards in the digital environment were strengthened with the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment, currently available in several languages.

■ The Lanzarote Committee progressed with the analysis of the situation in parties within the context of its second thematic monitoring round focusing particularly on the legislative framework to protect children against the criminal exploitation of child self-generated sexual content (in particular sexually explicit images and videos). The Lanzarote Committee also developed and tested a procedure to involve children in its monitoring work. The European Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (18 November) mobilised a good number of Council of Europe member states to launch the “Start to Talk” initiative protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in sport.





Laying of the cornerstone of the EDQM secondary site – **Snežana Samardžić-Marković**, Director General of Democracy at the Council of Europe, **Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Jean-Luc Bohl**, President of Metz Métropole, and **Susanne Keitel**, Director of the EDQM (Ars-Laquenexy, 11 June 2018)

## EUROPEAN DIRECTORATE FOR THE QUALITY OF MEDICINES & HEALTHCARE (EDQM)

— The European Pharmacopoeia (Ph. Eur.) Commission adopted 49 new and 293 revised monographs and general chapters for publication in the Ph.Eur., taking account of scientific and technological developments. The Ph. Eur. Commission also continued its efforts in the field of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animal use) by adopting a revised version of Chapter 2.6.33 on residual pertussis toxin in which the histamine sensitisation test in mice has been replaced by a standardised CHO cell-clustering assay for residual pertussis toxin testing, based on the results of two EDQM collaborative studies. This constitutes another major 3R achievement following the complete suppression of the test for abnormal toxicity from the Ph. Eur. in 2017. The Ph. Eur. Commission has adopted 397 reference standards (RSs) established by the EDQM Laboratory. Some 105 are new RSs and 292 are replacement batches of existing RSs.

— With regards the Certification of Suitability Procedure (CEP), the evaluation and inspection activities have been conducted smoothly, and a number of guidelines have been revised, which will bring major changes to the working procedures in 2019. Continued efforts have been made to strengthen the relationships with competent authorities and to increase acceptance of CEPs around the globe. There has been a worldwide quality issue with some active substances broadly used in anti-hypertensive medicines that the EDQM has managed in close collaboration with the concerned competent authorities.

— The Official Medicines Control Laboratory (OMCL) of the Republic of Moldova has joined the OMCL network as a full member. Efforts were made to help the network of OMCLs responsible for the testing of vaccines and blood-derived medicines in the EU to deal with the challenges linked to Brexit; as a consequence, the risk of supply shortages for such products due to Brexit was minimised.<sup>19</sup>

— The Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (CETS No. 211, Medicrime Convention) was promoted through a workshop for inspectors in the pharmaceutical field and at meetings with other relevant international organisations.

— In the field of pharmaceutical care, the Committee of Ministers adopted Resolution CM/Res(2018)1 on the classification of medicines as regards their supply. Based on the decision of the Committee of Ministers, two new steering committees in the field of consumer health were established: the European Committee for Cosmetics and Consumer Health (CD-P-COS) and the European Committee for Food Contact Materials and Articles (CD-P-MCA), replacing and continuing the work of the previous European Committee for Consumer Health Protection (CD-P-SC) in a more streamlined manner.

19. The activities of the OMCL network are co-funded by the EU.

■ In the field of organ, tissue and cell transplantation, the eighth edition of the *Guide to the Quality and Safety of Organs for Transplantation* and the booklet “Donation of oocytes<sup>20</sup> – a guide for women to support informed decisions”, dedicated to the general public, were published. The CD-P-TO position statement on Global Kidney Exchange was adopted and triggered a statement from the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly.

■ The “Good Practice Guidelines for Blood Establishments (BEs)”, published 2017 in the 19th edition of the *Guide to the Preparation, Use and Quality Assurance of Blood Components*, are currently under consideration for adoption as global guidelines. Work has continued to further improve quality management systems in BEs in both EU and Council of Europe member states through the conduct of auditing and external quality assessments schemes.<sup>21</sup>

■ The EDQM successfully passed ISO audits by official certification and accreditation bodies. The scope of its ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation has been extended to nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy and quantitative nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy; the scope of its ISO 9001 certification has been extended to the establishment, manufacturing, storage, distribution and monitoring of European Pharmacopoeia reference standards.

## DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

### Safety of Journalists Platform

■ In 2018, the platform received 140 alerts regarding 32 Council of Europe member states, of which 40% had been responded to or resolved by the end of the year. In January 2018, the partner organisations of the platform published the first annual report on media freedom in Europe, pointing out growing threats to journalists’ safety. The most serious incidents, categorised as level 1, represented 40% of all the cases in 2018. At least two journalists were killed in 2018 in connection with their profession, while 17 murder cases remained unpunished. On 2 November 2018, for the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, a specific web page was launched, highlighting these cases.

20. *Guide to the Quality and Safety of Organs for Transplantation* and “Donation of oocytes, a guide for women to support informed decisions”.

21. The activities in the field of blood quality management systems are co-funded by the EU.



“Is this it?” – Evaluation Conference of the “No Hate Speech Movement” youth campaign (Strasbourg, 12 April 2018)

## Education

■ The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) was launched at a Danish Chairmanship Conference in April 2018. The campaign “Safe to Learn, Free to Speak – Democratic Schools for All”, launched in November 2018 and run in close co-operation with the European Wergeland Centre, will promote the framework.

■ The European Qualifications for Passport for Refugees assesses refugees’ qualifications even when they cannot be fully documented. It helps implement the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165, Lisbon Recognition Convention) and its recommendation on refugees’ qualifications. Nine countries are participating in the current phase of the project. A total of 287 applications have been assessed and 221 Qualifications Passports issued. The Education Department has also produced a toolkit to promote language support for adult refugees.

■ The Education Department contributes to UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goal 4 and hosted the Regional Consultation for Europe and North America.

■ Some 12 externally financed capacity-building programmes support countries to promote a democratic and inclusive culture and to introduce anti-corruption measures to education.

■ The European Centre for Modern Languages promotes excellence and innovation in language teaching and supports members of the Partial Agreement in implementing effective language education policies. Its 2016-19 programme places languages at the heart of learning.

■ The Schools of Political Studies were integrated into the Education Department in 2018.

## Youth

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■ Several thousand young people participated in training or other activities at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, or were supported by the European Youth Foundation.

■ Rights-based youth policy and youth work focused on human rights education, access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, freedom of association and participation. Although the No Hate Speech Movement youth campaign came to a close at European level, partners continue to work for human rights online and to combat all forms of discrimination. Anti-Gypsyism and the participation of young Roma people were addressed through the Roma Youth Action Plan. The Youth Peace Camp and Euro-Arab youth co-operation strengthened young people's roles in intercultural dialogue and peace-building. Various youth work projects promoted the social inclusion of young refugees.

■ A new draft Committee of Ministers' recommendation on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood was prepared. The Czech Republic, Cyprus, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"<sup>22</sup> and Ukraine continued to benefit from tailor-made youth policy support measures.

## Heritage/Culture

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■ The Council of Europe launched a new joint project with the EU: "The Faro Way: enhanced participation in cultural heritage".

■ The European Heritage Days Programme played a key role in the implementation of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, in all 50 European states. More than 70 000 events were organised and celebrated under the common theme "European Year of Cultural Heritage: The Art of Sharing". Three new activities were launched: the European Heritage Stories; the European Heritage Makers Week for children and young people; and cross-frontier support for joint events.

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22. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.

■ The culture sector underlined the key role of the arts and culture in today's debate on artificial intelligence. It also generated Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)10 on culture's contribution to strengthening the internet as an emancipatory force, encouraging digitally and democratically competent and creative citizens.

## European Landscape Convention

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■ The "Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe" was established and Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)9 on contributing to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe: creation of public funds for landscape was adopted. The book *Council of Europe Landscape Convention: Contribution to human rights, democracy and sustainable development* was published. The International Landscape Day was celebrated under the theme "Landscape and Education".

## Bern Convention

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■ The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ETS No. 104, Bern Convention) adopted three country-specific recommendations targeting Albania, Bulgaria and Montenegro and continued monitoring parties' obligations through its case-file system, including registering seven new complaints from NGOs. It tackled two major biodiversity issues linked to the conservation of large carnivores and European sturgeon populations. The Emerald Network of nature protection sites under the convention initiated work on the network sites' national designation and management objectives.

## European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA Partial Agreement)

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■ The agreement contributed to the organisation of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction together with UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the EU (Rome, 21-23 November), notably in the field of vulnerable groups, protection of cultural heritage and gender mainstreaming. The Slovak Republic joined the agreement in 2018.

## Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes

■ The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes increased its membership with three new states parties making the total 32, and now has 33 certified Cultural Routes.

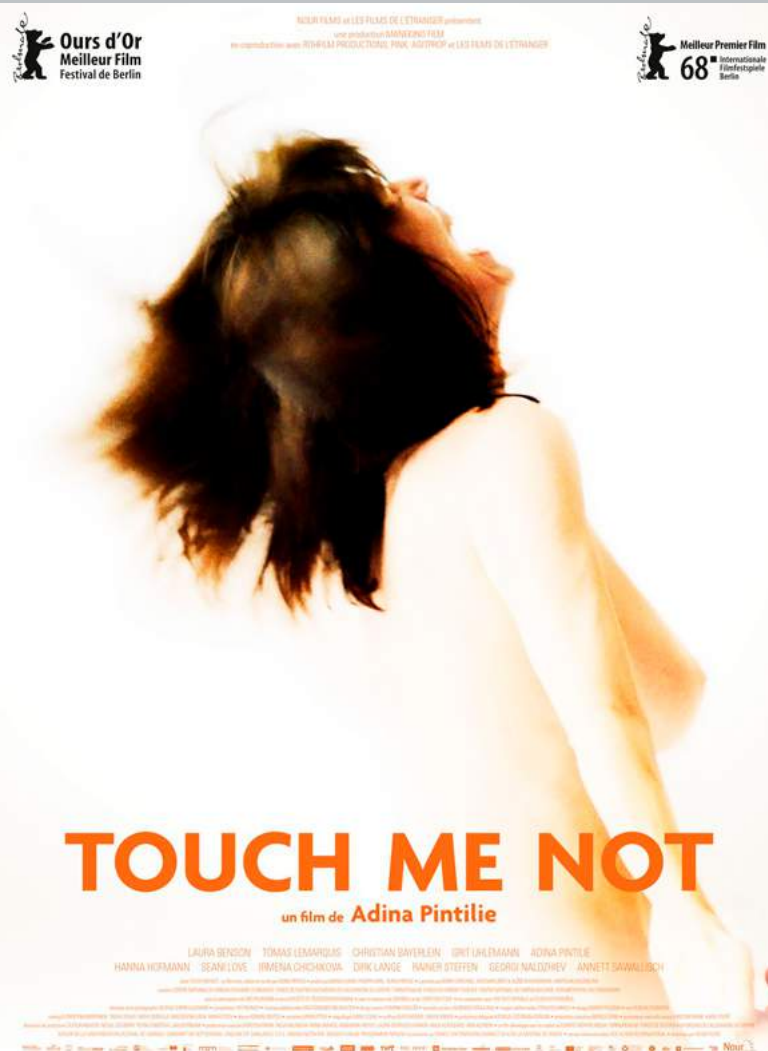
## Eurimages Enlarged Partial Agreement

■ Eurimages – the European Cinema Support Fund – supported 78 European co-productions amounting to a total of €19.9 million. Numerous co-productions supported by Eurimages figured among those winning prestigious prizes at the big international film festivals, such as the Berlinale’s Golden Bear for *Touch me not* by Adina Pintilie and the Crystal Bear for the Best Film for *Fortuna* by Germinal Roaux. Twenty films supported by the fund were nominated at Cannes, where *Lazzaro Felice (Happy as Lazzaro)* by Alice Rohrwacher won the Prize for Best Script, *Cold War* by Pawel Pawlikowski that of Best Director and *Gräns (Border)* by Ali Abbasi the prize in the Un Certain Regard section. The co-production *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians* by Radu Jude won the highest award, the Crystal Globe at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and the film *Woman at War* by Benedikt Erlingsson went away with the Grand Audience Award at Seville, the European Parliament’s Lux Prize, and the very prestigious Nordic Council Film Prize. *Cold War* by Pawel Pawlikowski triumphed at the European Film Awards where it was awarded prizes for Best Film, Best Director, Best Script Writer, Best Editor and Best Actress.

■ An evaluation of the fund’s activities and functions was carried out by Ernst & Young France, a summary of which is available online. The recommendations and findings of this study will be thoroughly examined with a view to improving the internal and external performance of the fund.

## North-South Centre (European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity)

■ The conference “Migrant, Refugee and Asylum-seeking Women and Girls in the Euromed Region”, between 3 and 4 October in Athens, was an opportunity to present good practices and share information and experiences.



The film *Touch me not* d’Adina Pintilie, a co-production supported by Eurimages, won the prestigious Berlinale’s Golden Bear in 2018

■ The North-South Centre continued to promote global education throughout Europe, in particular in the Baltic, Balkan, South-East Europe, Mediterranean and Visegrád countries. The Global Education Week took place from 19 to 25 November under the theme “The World is changing, what about us?”, focusing on sustainable lifestyles and relating directly to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

■ Kristiina Kumpula, Secretary-General of the Finnish Red Cross, and Abbas Gullet, Vice President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Secretary-General of Kenya Red Cross Society, were awarded the 2018 North-South Prize. The 24th edition of the Lisbon Forum promoted youth engagement in decision-making processes to ensure peace and democracy in the Euro-Mediterranean area.



**Launching of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 –**  
**Marianne Mikko**, Head of the Delegation of Estonia to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,  
**Khemaies Jhinaoui**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Tunisian Republic,  
**Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and  
**Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
(Strasbourg, 9 October 2018)

# Actions in the field and resource mobilisation

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## MEMBER STATES

**T**he Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe (C-PROC) in **Romania** implemented some 220 technical assistance activities in all regions of the world, including improving cybercrime legislation and rule of law safeguards, training of the judiciary and criminal justice authorities, and strengthening public-private and international co-operation. The number of parties to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime increased to 62 with Argentina, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Ghana, Morocco, Paraguay and Philippines acceding in 2018. The number of Parties to the Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism increased to 31 states.

### Eastern Europe

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■ In the **Republic of Moldova**, the Council of Europe launched a new project on criminal justice reform that includes increasing the capacities of the penitentiary and probation services. The capacity of the Equality Council and the Ombudsperson Office to effectively implement communication and awareness-raising strategies were enhanced. Other actions aimed at increasing the professionalism of public broadcasters, developing a new audiovisual code and strengthening the capacities of the law-enforcement agencies to fight and prevent corruption and money laundering.

■ In the **Russian Federation**, work continued on human rights in sports, fighting corruption and strengthening the capacities of legal professionals to combat domestic violence and trafficking in human beings.

■ Activities in **Ukraine** included assistance to the decentralisation reform and supporting the recently established public broadcaster. The organisational assessment of the Prosecutor General's Office covering analysis of the policy-making, management, institutional set-up and business processes was launched. Other actions, including those aimed at protecting the rights of IDPs and minorities, at advancing electoral reform, at combating violence against women and children, at enhancing the implementation of human rights standards, at supporting the reform of the penitentiary and the justice reform and at fighting corruption, were also implemented.

### South Caucasus

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■ In **Armenia**, significant steps were taken to further reform prison healthcare services and the criminal justice system; judicial reforms were advanced and the capacity of the Human Rights Defender's Office was enhanced. Other important developments included improving the skills of law-enforcement officers and the judiciary to respond to violence against women and domestic violence as well as promoting the prevention, identification, referral and handling of human rights violations in the armed forces.

■ In **Azerbaijan** the Council of Europe provided technical assistance to the judiciary, law-enforcement agencies, the parliament and media professionals, and supported legal developments and standard setting regarding the anti-money laundering framework and gender equality. A new Council of Europe Action Plan for Azerbaijan 2018-2021 was drawn up during the first half of the year and endorsed by the Committee of Ministers in October 2018.

The Kingdom of Morocco accedes to the Convention on Cybercrime – **Khalid Afkir**, Consul General of the Kingdom of Morocco, in the presence of **Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 29 June 2018)



■ The Council of Europe continued supporting judicial reform in **Georgia**, including enhancing the independence of the Constitutional Court. Work continued on improving general and mental health care in the prison system, on enhancing supervision mechanisms over the execution of Court judgments and improving the transparency of the electoral process. Other fields covered included preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and fighting discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech.

### South-East Europe and Turkey

■ The Council of Europe continued to support the justice reform in **Albania**, including through CEPEJ methodology and tools. Assistance was also provided to the electoral and penitentiary reforms, the reform of the State Advocate and to fighting discrimination, including against the LGBTI community. The law on asset declarations and audit, the new Parliamentary Code of Conduct and Journalistic Code of Ethics were further revised and improved. Relevant professional training was provided to anti-money laundering and terrorist financing supervisory authorities and to senior management within central and local public administrations.

■ In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, through the Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021, the Council of Europe contributed to the country's implementation of the Reform Agenda for 2015-2018, and in particular to the implementation of sectoral strategies related to human rights, democracy and rule of law. In particular, this concerns strengthening the institution of Human Rights Ombudsman, combating discrimination and ethnic segregation in schools, strengthening the protection of national minorities, Roma integration,<sup>23</sup> freedom of expression and media and penitentiary reform.

23 The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. This information is by way of an explanatory footnote, and is not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.



**Octopus Conference 2018** – Futures: Artificial Intelligence and Cybercrime (Strasbourg, 13 July 2018)

■ The Council of Europe assisted the authorities of "**the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**"<sup>24</sup> in setting up an independent external oversight mechanism to cover the work of the police. Co-operation also continued in the fight against economic crime and trafficking in human beings, penitentiary reform, freedom of expression/freedom of media and harmonisation of domestic judicial practices.

■ Council of Europe action in **Montenegro** continued to focus on human rights and the protection of vulnerable groups, implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights, the accountability and independence of the judiciary, education and the fight against economic crime.

■ In **Serbia**, the Council of Europe continued to support the constitutional reform process, media freedom, inclusive education and integrity in higher education, and the protection of national minorities. The Council of Europe also continued supporting implementation of the public administration reform and signed another three-year financial commitment to support human resource management in local self-governments.

24. As of 12 February 2019, the official name of this country has changed to North Macedonia.

■ The work on supporting individual applications to the Constitutional Court continued and even intensified in **Turkey**. Projects to strengthen the capacities of bar associations and lawyers and to strengthen the democratic culture in education were launched in 2018. Other actions included the effectiveness of investigations into allegations of ill-treatment and combating impunity and the protection of the rights of refugees and migrants.

## NON-MEMBER STATES

■ In 2018, co-operation with **Belarus**<sup>25</sup> éfocused on the fight against money laundering, judicial reform, human rights in biomedicine, local governance and human rights training for legal professionals. Work continued with the national authorities towards the moratorium on the death penalty with its subsequent abolition.

■ In **Kosovo**,<sup>26</sup> projects continued in the field of efficiency of justice, the fight against economic crime, anti-discrimination, education including integrity in higher education and access to language learning, freedom of expression/freedom of the media, and protection of the rights of people deprived of liberty. Support was also provided to institutions such as the Ombudsperson, the National Preventive Mechanism and the Police Inspectorate.

## Southern Neighbourhood

■ The Council of Europe continued to implement a programme of tailored activities focusing notably on torture-prevention standards and on the fight against corruption. Institutional and political engagement was exemplified by the adoption of the new Neighbourhood Partnership for 2018-2021 with **Tunisia**. In December 2018 two major Council of Europe–EU joint programmes were agreed. This, together with all other voluntary contributions committed to towards the end of the year, promises a step change in operational capacity and programme activity in 2019.

25. Belarus participates in the activities implemented under Council of Europe–EU Partnership for Good Governance and other donors also provide voluntary contributions for co-operation with Belarus.

26. All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.



**Ukrainian delegation** visiting Strasbourg for high-level discussions on prosecution reform in Ukraine with Council of Europe representatives (Strasbourg, 17 December 2018)



**Launch of the new co-operation programme South Programme III:** Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean (Strasbourg, 18 September 2018)

■ In **Morocco**, the adoption in 2018 of the new Neighbourhood Partnership for 2018-2021 paved the way for further co-operation and continued support to Morocco in the fields of judicial reform, corruption and gender equality.

■ Co-operation with **Palestine**<sup>27</sup> continued within the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities.

■ Co-operation activities at the regional level, with the participation of southern Mediterranean countries including **Jordan**, were implemented under the EU-Council of Europe South Programme III.

## Central Asia

■ Co-operation with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan continued in the framework of the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities documents (NCP). In **Kazakhstan**, the NCP came to an end in July 2018 and a new strategic document is being prepared. The Council of Europe finalised a project assisting the Kazakh authorities in reforming the criminal justice system.<sup>28</sup> In **Kyrgyzstan**, co-operation focused mainly on the fight against corruption and electoral reform.

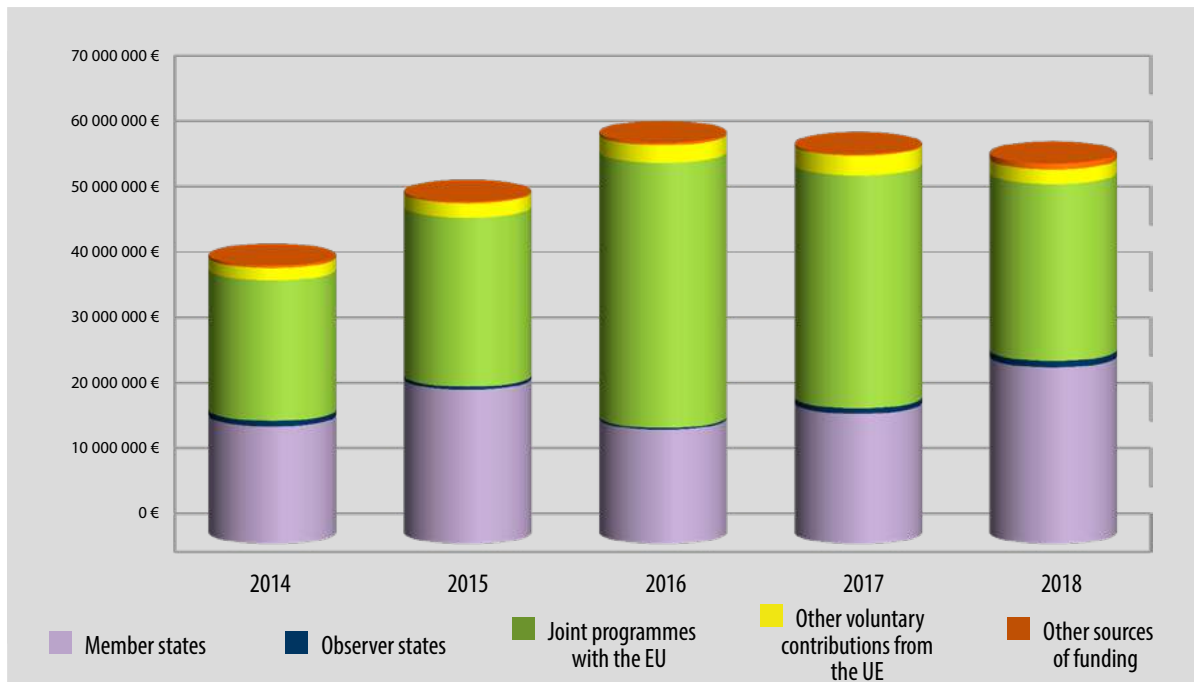
27. This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member states on this issue.

28. The Council of Europe–EU joint programme “Support to the Kazakh authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Kazakh justice system”, July 2014 to July 2018, with a budget of é2 million.



## RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND DONOR RELATIONS

### Extra-budgetary receipts 2018 (in euros)



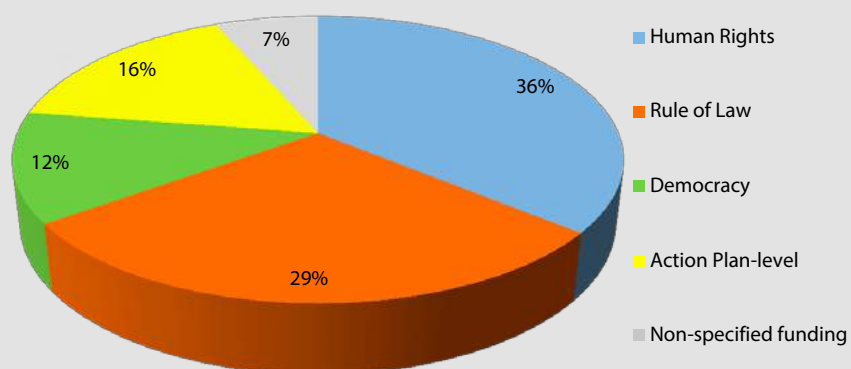
#### 2018 compared to 2017

- ▶ Overall receipts **decreased by 2.4%** to approximately **€58.1 million** (59.5 in 2017, 61.2 in 2016, 52.3 in 2015, 42.5 million in 2014, 39.3 million in 2013).
- ▶ Voluntary contributions from **member states<sup>29</sup> increased by 36% to 27 million** (2017 saw an increase of 14%).
- ▶ Of the 47 **member states, 44 made extra-budgetary contributions in 2018** (compared 35 in 2017). This is a record high. The top ten member states represent 81% of the total extra-budgetary receipts from member states (80% in 2017).
- ▶ **Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria** rank highest among member states with contributions of 8.6 million, 3.2 million, 2.3 million, 2.1 million, 1.4 million, 1.2 million and 1 million, respectively. The Human Rights Trust Fund<sup>30</sup> contributed 1.2 million.
- ▶ Receipts in the framework of **Council of Europe/EU Joint Programmes decreased by 24% to 27 million** (35.6 million in 2017) and accounted for 47% of total extra-budgetary receipts.
- ▶ The EU also made a number of voluntary contributions outside of joint programmes amounting to 2.2 million (2 million to the EDQM, 200 000 to the CEPEJ, 19 000 to the Bern Convention, 3 000 for Council of Europe visibility).
- ▶ Contributions from non-member states having observer status increased to 991 000, with the USA accounting for 856 000.
- ▶ Other sources (i.e. not EU, member or observer states) contributed 924 000, equivalent to approximately 1.6% of overall extra-budgetary receipts.

29. Including the Human Rights Trust Fund and the EEA and Norway Grants.

30. Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

### 2018 EXTRA BUDGETARY RESOURCES PER PILLAR OF THE PROGRAMME AND BUDGET



EXTRA BUDGETARY RESOURCES PER PILLAR		€
HUMAN RIGHTS		20 915 652,74
RULE OF LAW		16 877 704,79
DEMOCRACY		7 191 881,36
ACTION PLAN-LEVEL		9 341 051,81
NON-SPECIFIED FUNDING		3 792 639,96
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>58 118 930,66</b>



**The 57th meeting of the Committee of Legal  
Advisers on Public International Law**  
(Strasbourg, 20 September 2018)

# Public international law

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*www.coe.int/en/web/cahdi*

**T**he Council of Europe facilitates exchanges and co-ordinates the views of its member states in the field of public international law through the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI), an intergovernmental committee which brings together the Legal Advisers of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the member states of the Council of Europe as well as of a significant number of observer states and international organisations. In 2018, around 90 experts from 46 member states, eight non-member states and five international intergovernmental organisations participated in the two CAHDI meetings.

■ In its flagship function as “The European Observatory of Reservations to International Treaties” the CAHDI examines reservations and declarations subject to objection in international treaties prepared within the Council of Europe, but also concerning United Nations conventions. This activity, involving 26 reservations and/or declarations in 2018, contributes to an important dialogue at the international level and has an impact on the subsequent actions of states with regard to their respective reservations and/or declarations.

■ One of the main roles of the CAHDI is to provide legal advice to the Committee of Ministers. In this respect, the CAHDI prepared three Legal Opinions on the following recommendations of the Parliamentary

Assembly of the Council of Europe: Recommendation 2130 (2018) “Legal challenges related to hybrid war and human rights obligations”; Recommendation 2125 (2018) “State of emergency: proportionality issues concerning derogations under Article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights”; and Recommendation 2126 (2018) “Humanitarian needs and rights of internally displaced persons in Europe”.

■ In 2018, the CAHDI gathered the replies of 38 member states and non-member states to its questionnaire, “Immunities of Special Missions”, and prepared an analytical report of the information submitted, to be included in a publication on this topic. The CAHDI book will be published by Brill Nijhoff in early 2019.

■ Over the year, CAHDI continued and strengthened its co-operation and collaboration with the UN and international tribunals. It held exchanges of views with Mr Allan Rosas, judge of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU); Mr Stephen Mathias, Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs of the United Nations; and Mr Pavel Šturma, First Vice-Chair of the International Law Commission (ILC) of the United Nations. Furthermore, the chair and the secretariat of the CAHDI participated in the debates of the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly and the annual exchanges of views with the ILC.



Press conference with **Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and **Josep Borrell Fontelles**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation of Spain (Strasbourg, 11 September 2018)

# Communications

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**Working closely with media professionals and European influencers and networks, the Directorate of Communications (DC) generated greater visibility for the values and standards of the Council of Europe in 2018.**

## ONLINE AND AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

In 2018, 14 video productions were made internally and outsourced. New films were prepared for the “Impact of the European Convention on Human Rights” web pages, along with other products in support of work on artificial intelligence, children’s rights and campaign topics. In addition, several existing films on topics such as child sexual abuse, the Václav Havel Prize, sexual harassment in parliaments and the death penalty were updated or modified. Preparations were also made for a video to mark the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe in 2019.

The number of unique visitors to the Council of Europe hub increased by 67% in 2018, compared to 2017, reaching more than 6.1 million and the number of pages viewed increased by almost 31%. New marketing tools were added to the Human Rights Channel, including a special online quiz for International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (17 May) and a page to mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (2 November). The web project “Impact of the European Convention on Human Rights”, created to provide examples of the positive impact of decisions of the Strasbourg Court, continued to go from strength to strength, and was translated into French, Turkish and Russian. The number of followers on social media accounts continued to increase, and the number of video streams on Council of Europe websites reached 522 000.

Of the 86 new stories made in 2018, more than 35% related to Parliamentary Assembly topics and speakers. Decisions and hearings from the European Court of Human Rights generated 27% of stories. Congress stories represented 5%. Personalities and specific Council of Europe topics together accounted for 33%. More than three quarters of new stories were sent to the leading video news agencies ENEX, Eurovision, Reuters, APTN and Ruptly, with individual TV stations accounting for the remaining 21%. A total of 30 interviews were conducted in the Council of Europe’s TV studio on topics relevant to the Council of Europe’s work and messages from officials, experts and politicians, including two Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Finland and Armenia). Six Facebook Lives were broadcast, taking Council of Europe topics and content to a broader online audience.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

■ The Organisation's identity and values were promoted among various target groups through public relations activities and events, in particular on the occasions of the month for reaching out to others ("le mois de l'Autre") in Strasbourg in April, the Festival of Europe in Paris in May, the Strasbourg Races and the City Cap event in Strasbourg in May. The activities of the Organisation were presented at the European Youth event that gathered 8 000 young Europeans in June in front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

■ The Council of Europe was also present at the Brussels book fair, the legal book fair in Paris, the Frankfurt book fair and at the annual European Consortium of Political Research in Hamburg in August and at the ESIL (European Society for International Law) in Manchester in September. The Council of Europe's publications were presented at a number of events throughout the year, including the Open Day of the Slovak Constitutional Court, the 20 events held to celebrate 25 years of the application of the European Convention on Human Rights in Poland and 100 other specialist seminars.

■ For all these events, visual and information material (leaflets, booklets, posters, exhibition panels, etc.) were designed and produced. They were promoted via the contacts database (featuring more than 15 000 addresses) and partner sites.

■ Commercial publications have highlighted the Organisation's priorities, in particular the publications entitled *Prison: a breeding ground for radicalisation and violent extremism?* (in English and French), *Human rights and criminal procedure* (in English), *An introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights* (in English and French) and *Preventing torture in Europe* (in English).

■ The game on European values aimed at children aged 8 to 12 was translated into two additional languages and distributed in 16 countries, the game booklet detailing the role of the various European institutions has now been published in four languages and more than 160 reproduction or translation agreements were finalised.

■ The online publications platform continues to extend its range of digital products, with over 2 000 files available in pdf, epub and mobi formats. Material for the general public (leaflets, posters, documents for teachers, etc.) can all be consulted and downloaded free of charge from [doc.coe.int](http://doc.coe.int). Other publications can be ordered online at [book.coe.int](http://book.coe.int), the online bookshop, where excerpts from books can also be found. The two sites totalled more than 940 000 visits over the year and the number of subscribers to the publication information bulletin exceeded 40 000. In addition, over 4 000 digitised publications from the Council of Europe are available on Google Play, with 840 000 book visits in 2018.

■ More than 35 000 visitors (967 groups) took part in Council of Europe study tours and guided visits, and 550 German primary school pupils attended one single open day at the Palais de l'Europe. Over 400 customised lectures were given during personalised tours.

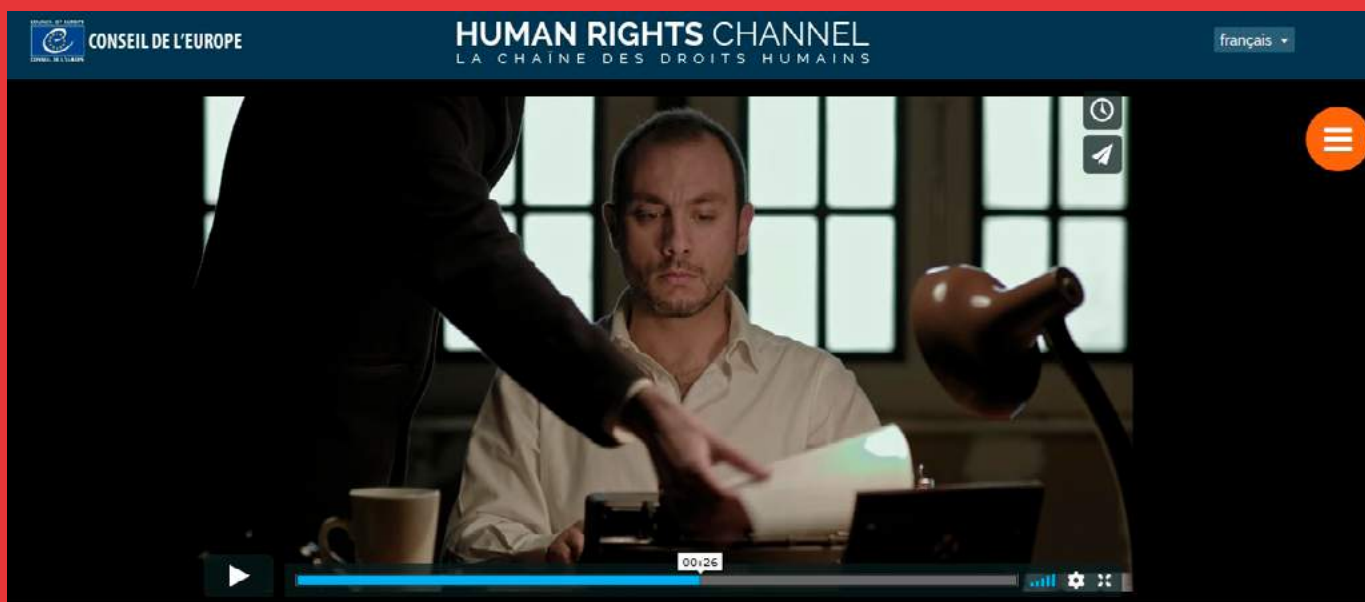
■ The partnership with the European Law Students Association (ELSA) network continued with the holding of the sixth Human Rights Moot Court Competition in English: 104 teams from 32 European countries pleaded in a fictitious case on freedom of religion. The final took place in February at the European Court of Human Rights, with 19 teams from 14 different countries taking part. ELSA Day 2018 focused on the theme of right to education, and the work of the Council of Europe was presented at 40 events in 15 countries. The partnership with the University of Strasbourg for the French version of the moot court (Concours René Cassin) continued with 300 students at the finals held in Strasbourg from 22 to 24 March 2017. The partnership with the Strasbourg Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) was strengthened with the holding of the European Prize for Eloquence on from 5 to 7 March, again with approximately 300 participants (12 for the final, from 10 countries), and with the Model United Nations simulation event (105 participants in March).

■ The visual identity was strengthened throughout the Organisation with harmonised templates, visibility items and roll-ups and banners for events, in particular for preparing the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe.



**The sixth edition of the European Human Rights Moot Court ELSA Competition (2018).** The winning team from IE University in Madrid with Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 4 May 2018)

The website **Human Rights Channel** is a showcase for the Council of Europe's extensive collection of video and photo content on fundamental human rights



Vous êtes ici : [Human Rights Channel](#) > [Thèmes](#) > [Démocratie](#) > [Don't let the truth be torn apart!](#)

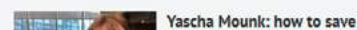
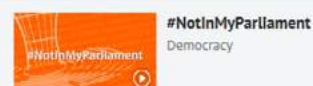
## Don't let the truth be torn apart!

Stand up for media freedom!

▶ 1'00" | 16 June 2018 | Universidade Lusófona | Lisbon, Portugal

This video was made by film students at the Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, Portugal. Without freedom of the press, we are all blind and deaf. The press is our watchdog over the actions of governments, politicians, international organizations, corporations, and other establishments. Journalists have the right to work freely, without a shadow looking over their shoulder and tearing through their words. Censorship is silence, and with silence comes oblivion.

### VIDÉOS SUR LE MÊME SUJET







# 2018 contributions of Council of Europe member states (in euros)

MEMBER STATES	
Albania	486 606.16
Andorra	233 813.50
Armenia	490 932.87
Austria	5 515 040.91
Azerbaijan	1 294 627.04
Belgium	7 761 781.26
Bosnia and Herzegovina	577 848.52
Bulgaria	1 175 676.84
Croatia	1 056 161.14
Cyprus	513 338.03
Czech Republic	3 150 435.79
Denmark	4 561 542.33
Estonia	494 043.65
Finland	3 459 993.66
France	38 217 164.49
Georgia	539 604.99
Germany	36 365 470.76
Greece	3 394 325.49
Hungary	2 239 066.72
Iceland	509 083.19
Ireland	3 509 023.79
Italy	35 261 058.35
Latvia	582 105.32
Liechtenstein	370 975.08
Lithuania	807 793.30
Luxembourg	1 107 368.11
North Macedonia	495 175.60
Malta	384 476.08
Moldova	354 258.83
Monaco	355 571.86
Montenegro	387 944.28
Netherlands	10 912 096.09
Norway	6 100 985.69
Poland	8 379 023.55
Portugal	3 306 878.69
Romania	3 633 309.79
Russian Federation	32 781 559.39
San Marino	142 522.49
Serbia	1 110 363.76
Slovak Republic	1 511 233.45
Slovenia	787 353.68
Spain	18 275 416.62
Sweden	7 261 146.63
Switzerland	8 689 723.97
Turkey	14 568 797.17
Ukraine	4 011 652.06
United Kingdom	32 792 947.14
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>309 917 318.11</b>

# 2018 voluntary contributions to the Council of Europe (in euros)

MEMBER STATES			
Norway	8 643 338.40	Cyprus	87 332.84
Sweden	3 225 173.58	Poland	77 496.46
Denmark	2 257 135.35	Malta	52 262.68
Belgium	2 115 386.52	Russian Federation	40 648.26
United Kingdom	1 438 845.50	San Marino	40 000.00
Human Rights Trust Fund <sup>1</sup>	1 217 220.00	Estonia	37 887.84
Germany	1 150 009.00	Hungary	35 301.48
Austria	1 019 404.08	Lithuania	33 964.64
European Economic Area (EEA) <sup>2</sup>	892 908.00	Andorra	24 016.89
Switzerland	849 984.10	Croatia	19 526.85
France	627 653.00	Slovenia	18 845.77
Luxembourg	441 755.29	Bulgaria	14 868.93
Netherlands	365 109.42	Romania	13 120.94
Finland	354 630.11	Azerbaijan	12 841.24
Ukraine	348 416.34	Armenia	11 747.84
Italy	305 271.00	Serbia	10 383.82
Liechtenstein	223 859.70	Iceland	10 000.00
Ireland	168 650.32	Latvia	7 814.42
Monaco	154 332.84	Montenegro	7 332.84
Portugal	150 000.00	Spain	5 000.00
Slovak Republic	147 708.90	Albania	1 332.84
Turkey	142 065.96	Republic of Moldova	1 000.00
Czech Republic	128 159.99	Georgia	415.00
		<b>TOTAL MEMBER STATES</b>	<b>26 930 158.98</b>

1. Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom.
2. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway.

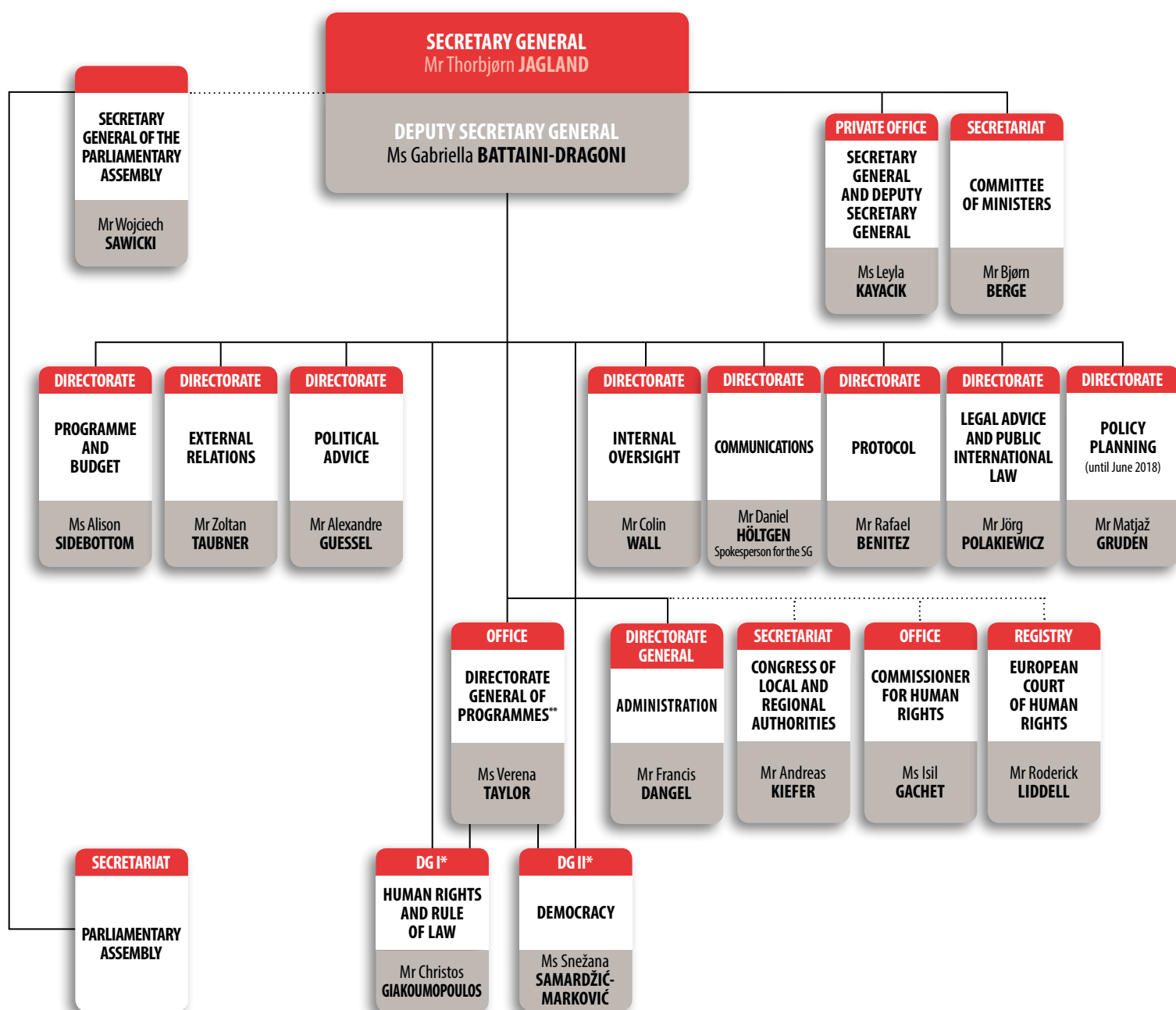
<b>OBSERVERS</b>	
United States of America	856 000.00
Japan	55 000.00
Mexico	49 975.00
Holy See	30 000.00
<b>TOTAL OBSERVERS</b>	<b>990 975.00</b>

<b>EUROPEAN UNION</b>	
Joint programmes	27 054 607.43
Voluntary contributions	2 218 752.00
<b>TOTAL EUROPEAN UNION</b>	<b>29 273 359.43</b>

<b>OTHERS</b>	
Qatar	360 000.00
Fund to End Violence Against Children	241 117.75

World Lottery Association	115 323.50
Aga Khan Development Network	50 000.00
European Lotteries	40 000.00
Israel	40 000.00
Isle of Man	30 000.00
States of Jersey	25 000.00
Charta 77 Foundation	7 500.00
Václav Havel Library	7 500.00
Moscow State Linguistic University	5 000.00
Organisation internationale de la francophonie	2 996.00
<b>TOTAL OTHERS</b>	<b>924 437.25</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL 2018</b>	<b>58 118 930.66</b>

# Organisation chart of the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe in 2018



\* DGI DGII report to the Secretary General

\*\* Office of the DG PROG co-ordinates intergovernmental activities

This publication presents the work carried out in 2018 by the different bodies and sectors of the Council of Europe, highlighting its particular strengths and achievements.

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.