

# THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## Unlimited Connections



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



View the map of member States: [www.coe.int/47countries1europe](http://www.coe.int/47countries1europe)

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

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

# Greater Europe

## from Iceland to Azerbaijan

So what is Greater Europe? It's a vast area, stretching from Iceland in the north-west, to Azerbaijan, in the south-east.

The Council of Europe represents this Greater European area.

### 47 member States

Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 States (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden) and then joined by Greece and Turkey (August 1949), the Council of Europe now has 47 member countries, thanks to the accession of:

- Iceland and Germany (1950),
- Austria (1956)
- Cyprus (1961),
- Switzerland (1963),
- Malta (1965),
- Portugal (1976),
- Spain (1977),
- Liechtenstein (1978),
- San Marino (1988),
- Finland (1989),
- Hungary (1990),
- Poland (1991),
- Bulgaria (1992),
- Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Romania (1993),
- Andorra (1994),
- Latvia, Albania, Moldova, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine (1995),
- the Russian Federation, Croatia (1996),
- Georgia (1999),
- Armenia and Azerbaijan (2001),
- Bosnia & Herzegovina (2002),
- Serbia (2003),
- Monaco (2004),
- Montenegro (2007).

**Be careful not to confuse the Council of Europe** with the **European Union**, a different institution which has 28 member countries.

The Council of Europe makes its voice heard beyond the confines of the continent too.

Five other countries have observer status with the Organisation:  
the United States, Canada, Japan, Mexico and the Holy See.

### Two official languages

English and French are the Council of Europe's official languages.  
German, Italian and Russian are used as working languages.



# A search engine for ideas and initiatives

Europe took shape as a political project in the wake of the Second World War, with the aim of bringing peace and prosperity to a continent that had been torn apart by wars and atrocities for far too long.

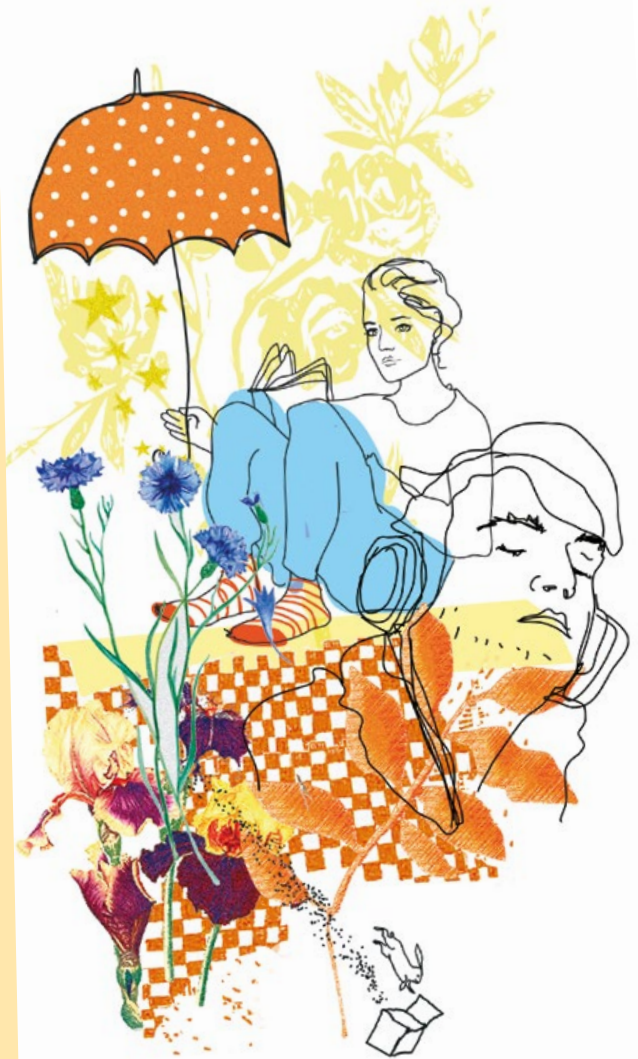
The creation of the Council of Europe in 1949 was the first foundation stone of European construction.

This Organisation is truly the oldest of all the European intergovernmental institutions.

The Council of Europe is like a huge network of shared values, values of peace, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It acts as an adviser to its 47 member States on the major topics of the moment, hosting a forum for debate and exchanges of ideas.

This Strasbourg-based Organisation also speaks out against the various potential threats to our societies, setting the standards for rights and freedoms in the immense "web" formed by Greater Europe.

For over 60 years, the Council of Europe has operated as a real search engine for ideas and initiatives for the whole continent.



# DISCUSSION FORUMS

The Council of Europe comes up with solutions to the key topical issues of our time, debating them in 4 major forums, which meet at regular intervals:

- The **Committee of Ministers** is made up of the States' 47 Foreign Affairs Ministers or their permanent representatives. It is the decision-making body directly representing the governments of the States, which decides on the Organisation's budget and programme of activities.
- The **Parliamentary Assembly** brings together representatives of the national parliaments speaking on behalf of all the Europeans who elected them. The Assembly discusses subjects of its choosing and then makes recommendations to the Committee of Ministers, which relays the proposed initiatives to each Council of Europe member country.
- The **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities** is an assembly of representatives elected in their country at the level of regions and municipalities, who are in close contact with local citizens.
- The **Conference of INGOs** (international non-governmental organisations) is a vital link between political decision-makers and citizens, making society's voice heard.



Through these 4 forums, the Council of Europe gives a voice to citizens, regions and countries.



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

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

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

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

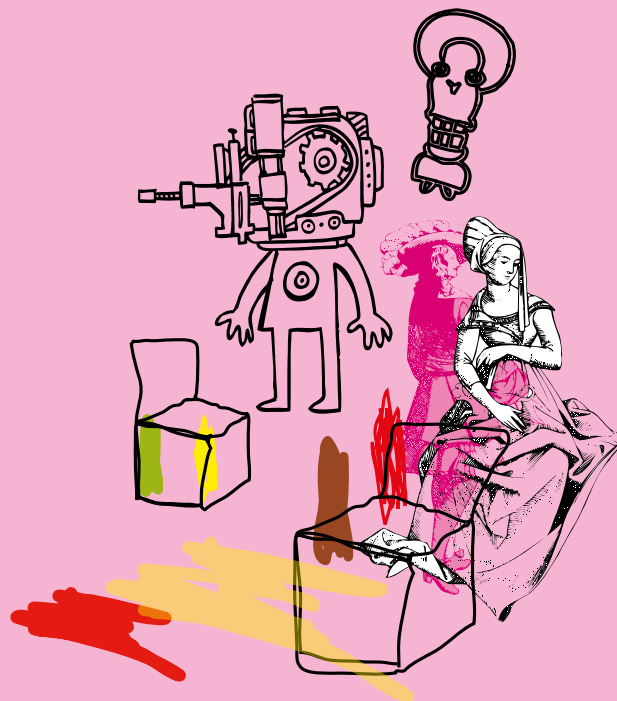


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## Hot topics

The Council of Europe covers a whole host of topics in its different assemblies. Here are a few recent examples:

- violence against women
- respect for democracy
- judicial corruption
- freedom of religion
- the consequences of the financial crisis
- media on the Internet and minors
- the challenges of climate change
- water as a strategic challenge
- combating terrorism while respecting human rights
- regional conflicts
- renewable energies and the environment



## From debate to action

- **discussion**  
in the Council of Europe's forums
- **deliberation**  
adoption of treaties, conventions, adopted texts
- **recommendation**  
of measures to be taken in each country

One of the Council of Europe core values, **democracy** is a form of government where citizens are the ones who decide by voting and participating. The Council of Europe carries out regular fact-finding missions in its member countries, to check that democracy is being, or on the way to being, properly respected.





# RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS for all

Every human being, man, woman or child, has rights, fundamental rights that define their human identity. For over 60 years now, the Council of Europe has been providing the main tools for protecting those rights.

## A navigation tool for more freedom

The European Convention on Human Rights is a text created by the Council of Europe, an instrument which:

- **safeguards** freedom of thought, freedom of expression, the rights to life and security, the right to own property and the right to vote;
- **prohibits** torture, inhumane treatment, the death penalty, slavery, the collective exclusion of foreigners.

The Council's States have all signed the Convention, which commits them to ensuring respect for all these fundamental rights on their territory.

"There will be no peace on this planet as long as human rights are violated in some part of the world."

*René Cassin*

## Hosted by the Court

Any citizen may take a case to the European Court of Human Rights if they believe that one of their fundamental rights has been violated. After exhausting all the possible remedies in the country concerned, they may lodge an application with the Court. The Court deliberates on the case and obliges the State in question to comply with its ruling (its judgment). All the Court's judgments are based on the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court hearings take place in the Human Rights Building in Strasbourg.

Most of the Court's judgments concern the right to a fair trial and the length of judicial proceedings but it has also ruled on many other issues such as abortion, assisted suicide, body searches, domestic slavery, adoption by homosexuals, the wearing of religious symbols in schools, protection of journalists' sources and even environmental issues.



[www.human-rights-convention.org](http://www.human-rights-convention.org)

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

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

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

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



**The European Social Charter** is the Council of Europe instrument guaranteeing social and economic rights. It also provides for rights in the area of housing, health, education, employment, social protection, free movement and non-discrimination.

### A Greater Europe without the death penalty

The Council of Europe has succeeded in imposing the abolition of capital punishment in all its member States.

**"Article 1** – The death penalty shall be abolished. No one shall be condemned to such penalty or executed." (Protocol no. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights).

### The Commissioner for Human Rights investigates

Operating as an independent body, the Commissioner for Human Rights investigates the state of human rights in Europe, country by country, ensuring that the Council of Europe's instruments are complied with.

A few recent lines of inquiry

- Ever younger offenders in prison?
- Are the rights of disabled persons always properly respected?
- Roma children and their right to schooling
- The police and the recording of data
- Is the right to life (health, water, housing) threatened by climate change?
- Minorities and frequent stopping and searching by the police
- Do anti-terrorist measures respect human rights?

### Connecting with people

Human beings have individual rights but they also have rights governing their dealings with other people, in society, at work, when they arrive from another country, when they retire and so on.

Social cohesion is when a society seeks to ensure the well-being of all its members: women, men, children, young people, the elderly, disabled persons, foreigners, workers, pensioners, the unemployed etc.

### Visiting hours

Human rights do not stop at the gates of prisons or other places of detention. **The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)**, made up of doctors and lawyers, visits prisons, police stations and psychiatric hospitals all over Europe, checking on living conditions, accommodation, hygiene and health, and sends its comments to the States so that they can take its recommendations on board.





# Giving children a say

The Council of Europe is campaigning for children's voices to be heard in decision-making that concerns them: at home, at school, in their village, in their district, in courts etc



**Violence towards a child** is a violation of human rights. It may be of an obvious nature, when children are forced to work, are exploited or have to live in the street. It can be seen in schools too: violence against pupils, attacks on teachers, bullying, theft, insults, vandalism to school premises. Violence is often hidden, in places where children should be protected, in the home or alternative care institutions. And when violence is psychological, it might not be easy to see but it is just as damaging. Violence can be indirect too, in certain video games for example, or in overly aggressive sales and marketing practices.





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

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

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



**"Raise your hand against smacking",** a Council of Europe campaign promoting child education without violence. A "little" smack, slap, pinch, shake or clip round the ear are all breaches of a child's rights and, needless to say, cause serious physical and mental harm! Corporal punishment – disciplinary physical violence – is banned in Europe's schools, so why not at home?

### Zero tolerance of violence against children

In 2007, the Council of Europe adopted the **Convention for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**, the first international legal text to establish the various forms of sexual abuse of children as criminal offences, including abuse committed in the home or the family. It is estimated that in Europe today as many as 1 in 10 children or young adults suffer sexual abuse. The victims may be marked by their ordeal for the rest of their lives. The sexual abuse of children can take many different forms: incest (sexual relations with a member of the family), pornography, prostitution, organised paedophilia, assault, trafficking. It can happen anywhere, in the media, on the Internet, but it mostly occurs at home, carried out by members of the family or so-called "friends".





## A level playing field

Having a level playing field means that two teams can compete on an equal footing, a starting position of equality. But beyond the sports field, we must form one team working together to ensure equality between men and women or girls and boys. According to the official texts, women and men are equal in law but, in practice and everyday life, too many women and girls are direct victims of exploitation, domestic violence, unemployment, rape, discrimination and so on.



## Equality is not opposed to differences

In its fight for gender equality, the Council of Europe reminds us that the word “equality” also means:

**visibility:** men and women must have clear access to the same jobs and careers. Girls and boys must have the same options open to them at school, so that they can have an equal choice of careers later on.

**empowerment:** a man and a woman must enjoy the same degree of freedom. One of them must not depend on the other one. One must not maltreat or verbally or physically abuse the other.

**recognition:** men and women must have equal pay for the same work.

**participation:** men and women must be able to participate in the same way in political and public life, as well as in private and family life.

**Differences in gender do not mean differences in rights.**







# BIOETHICS, a firewall for science

Science, medicine and technology are constantly making progress but sometimes to the detriment of human beings. The Council of Europe has developed a whole package of ethical rules and ideas to accompany progress in medical science as it happens. This is bioethics, a kind of meeting point between medicine and human rights.

**DNA:** molecule containing all the information needed to create a living being. Fast advances in research and new technologies, like "DNA chips", are prompting the Council of Europe to focus on the ethical and legal issues raised by applications of genetics.

**Euthanasia:** (from the Greek eu=good and thanatos=death), meaning a gentle death, without suffering. The term refers to the use of methods to precipitate or cause death and curtail extreme suffering from an incurable illness. Euthanasia is triggering a lot of questions and arguments within society and within the Council of Europe: is it a crime or an ultimate act of care? Can someone be helped to die?

**Embryo:** first stage in the development of the egg in the animal kingdom or part of the seed in plants. In humans, from the eighth week, we speak of a foetus. When exactly does the embryo become a human being, when must it be protected? These are highly controversial questions to which the answers differ between countries, religions or philosophies. The Council of Europe's Bioethics Convention prohibits the use of medically assisted reproduction techniques with a view to selecting the sex of the future child or creating human embryos for research purposes.

**Cloning:** identical reproduction of a cell, a gene or an individual from its DNA. The Council of Europe prohibits the cloning of human beings.

"Science without conscience is but the perdition of the soul."  
*François Rabelais, 1532*



**Human genome:** contraction of gene and chromosome designating the complete collection of genetic material to be found in humans. Research in human genetics is progressing in leaps and bounds and opening up possibilities for curing illnesses. The Council of Europe is keen to ensure that genetic research or testing is not used for purposes other than medical ones.

**Organ transplants:** removal of an organ or tissue from an individual and transplantation of that organ or tissue into another individual. The Council of Europe lays particular emphasis on the principle of non-commercialisation and voluntary donation of substances of human origin in order to prevent organ trafficking.

**Xenografting:** transplantation of organ or tissue from animals into humans. The Council of Europe lists numerous precautions to be taken with this technique, drawing particular attention to the risks of viruses being transmitted from the source animal to the recipient and those around them.





# Blog it!

Ian, aged 15, publishes articles on a blog which he shares with a few friends. He wants to write one on freedom of expression in Europe and manages to arrange an interview with a representative of the Council of Europe to find out more...

## Ian: What is freedom of expression as you see it?

Freedom of expression is part and parcel of democracy. In the words of article 10 of the Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression".

## Ian: Can you give me an example?

When young people get into trouble for expressing alternative and critical views on the web about what their government is doing, that is an infringement of their freedom of expression.

## Ian: What about the media?

The media must be independent and free to express the full range of public opinion in their country.

## Ian: What happens if the media are all owned by the same people?

A concentration of media in the hands of a few is a threat to freedom of expression. When media are monopolised by a handful of really powerful multi-media groups, the diversity of information sources is in danger.

## Ian: Does the European Court of Human Rights play a role in protecting freedom of expression?

The Court plays a key role wherever freedom of expression is challenged. Over the last thirty years it has handed down a lot of rulings protecting this fundamental right.

## Ian: Are there any limits to freedom of expression?

Yes, some limits have to be set, in particular to prevent racist and xenophobic speech. Another imperative is not undermining the presumption of a person's innocence when reporting information. Media freedom is not a free licence, either, to invade people's privacy or to make gratuitous and unfounded defamatory statements.

## Ian: Are there any circumstances where freedom of expression is particularly under threat?

In a democracy freedom of expression and information is vital at all times but it becomes all the more important in a crisis, in war-time or where there is a terrorist threat. Governments must not take advantage of these situations, on the pretext of guaranteeing public security, in order to restrict the free movement of media professionals or access to information. The right of journalists not to reveal their sources must also be respected.





[www.twitter.com/councilofeurope](http://www.twitter.com/councilofeurope)

[www.facebook.com/pages/council-of-europe/42276542714](http://www.facebook.com/pages/council-of-europe/42276542714)

[www.youtube.com/user/councilofeurope](http://www.youtube.com/user/councilofeurope)

[www.coe.int/files/media-freedom/](http://www.coe.int/files/media-freedom/)



### **Ian: and in the fight against terrorism?**

The free circulation of information and ideas is one of the most effective means of promoting understanding and tolerance, and therefore of preventing and combating terrorism.

### **Ian: Does it happen in Europe that journalists are threatened?**

In some cases journalists are harassed by police, imprisoned for no reason and sometimes even assassinated, simply for doing their job. The Council of Europe condemns these incidents whenever they occur.

### **Ian: What does the Council of Europe do in the area of TV?**

For over fifteen years now, the Council of Europe has been looking at the free circulation of television programmes between the member States, freedom to receive programmes, the responsibility of broadcasters, programming content and advertising. All these topics are dealt with in the **European Convention on transfrontier television**, a text which is adapted to keep step with the latest developments.

### **Ian: How does the Internet influence freedom of expression in your opinion?**

The Internet has given a real boost to freedom of expression and information. For the Council of Europe, access to information on the Internet must be neither controlled nor restricted, there must be self-regulation and user anonymity must be preserved. But some measures do have to be taken, especially to protect children.



# TROJAN horses

Racism, exploitation, corruption, terrorism, money laundering, cybercrime, drugs... are all evils lurking in our societies that must not escape the Council of Europe's watchful eye. The Strasbourg Organisation comes up with suggestions on how to combat them.



## ... racism

Racism and intolerance towards certain groups or minorities are on the up in European societies. Ever since it was founded, the Council of Europe has systematically taken action against these phenomena. **The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)** combats all kinds of violence, discrimination and prejudice linked to race, colour, language, religion, nationality and national or ethnic origin.



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

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

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

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

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

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



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## ... corruption

Corruption is when a public official, police officer, judge, elected representative, doctor or even sports referee takes advantage of their position for monetary gain. It is thought that hundreds of billions of euros are made from corrupt dealings each year. That is why the Council of Europe, through its Group of States against corruption (Greco), is helping its member States to reform their institutions and practices to combat this plague.

## ... exploitation and trafficking of human beings

Every year thousands of men, women and children in Europe fall victim to some form of exploitation. The Council of Europe, through its **Convention on action against trafficking in human beings**, seeks to protect the victims, stand up for their rights and have the perpetrators of these acts prosecuted.

## ... money laundering

When a drug trafficker covers up their ill-gotten gains by reinvesting them in legitimate business, we talk about money "laundering". It is a practice that encourages all kinds of crime, including drug trafficking, arms trafficking, prostitution and corruption. All these issues are tackled in the Council of Europe's convention to combat money laundering.

## ... terrorism

Not a day goes by without new victims dying in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world. Following the successive attacks in New York, Washington, Istanbul, Madrid and London in the 2000s, the Council of Europe has stepped up its efforts to encourage governments to bring terrorist networks to justice but also to try to understand the kind of social factors that could make people want to carry out such acts of extremism. Web-based propaganda by terrorist networks is another major challenge and a real threat to human rights and democracy.

## ... drugs

Drug use points to problems not only for the individuals consuming them but also in society as a whole. Drugs create dependency among users. Children and their parents must be able to speak openly about drugs, and there must be dialogue at national and international level too. **The Pompidou Group**, bringing together 35 of the Council of Europe's member States (as well as the European Commission), encourages this debate between professionals, politicians and experts working on the ground, and helps countries in their efforts to fight against drug trafficking.





# Cybercrime

With over a billion users in the world, the Internet has a huge impact on society, but so too, unfortunately, does crime using the Internet, or cyber-crime. The Council of Europe is the first organisation to have drawn up a Convention on cybercrime at international level. Cybercriminals know no frontiers and can operate in any country.



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

[www.coe.int/internet-literacy/](http://www.coe.int/internet-literacy/)

[www.wildwebwoods.org](http://www.wildwebwoods.org)



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## What are the forms of cybercrime?

- malware or malicious codes and programmes, which may be viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spyware, bots or botnets
- criminal enterprises using tools like botnets, which are collections of software robots
- spam, which is mass junk advertising sent to web users, not only causing a nuisance but potentially carrying malware
- child pornography and the growing sexual exploitation of children to make money on the Internet
- circulating hate pamphlets and fanatical views using websites or spam
- terrorism using the Internet (hacking attacks against key infrastructures, recruitment, financing, propaganda)
- piracy, identity theft, fraud or money laundering to make illegal profits
- white-collar crime through hacking targeting specific users, groups, organisations or industrial companies
- crime linked to the development of on-line trading, community sites and “cloud computing” (using networked memories and computing systems).

Proper internet use is something to be encouraged, as long as it is completely safe.

The Council of Europe is also working to reduce the risks of young people ending up on unsuitable sites or coming into contact with people with the very worst intentions.

WWW is also for **Wild Web Woods**, the Council of Europe’s on-line game which teaches young people the basic security rules to follow when surfing the web.





## Click on Yes for diversity

The philosophy behind the European project is best summed up by the idea that our continent's identity is quite simply the result of diversity: diverse people, origins, histories and cultures, all added together to form a whole which we call Europe.

**Over 200 languages are spoken in Europe.** In addition to the official language(s) of each member State there are a whole host of regional and minority languages. These languages do not always have a written form and therefore risk disappearing. Whenever a language disappears, it is also a culture, a tradition, a heritage that becomes extinct.

To safeguard this linguistic wealth, the Council of Europe has drawn up a **charter**, signed by 24 States, encouraging countries to **facilitate the use of regional and minority languages** in public life, at school, in courts or in the media.







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

[www.dosta.org](http://www.dosta.org)

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

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

[www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net)



## Minority report

In Europe, as on other continents, people move around and set up home outside their country of origin in order to work, to reunite with their family or to escape the difficult living conditions in the country they left. That means that the populations of European countries consist of people originating from the country concerned (the majority) and people from elsewhere (minorities).

The Council of Europe calls on its member countries to develop policies which respect the rights of minorities, refugees and displaced persons; it also seeks to ensure that all countries manage migratory flows as well as possible and that migrants are successfully integrated in the different countries.

## Roma and Travellers

8 to 10 million Roma or Travellers are spread around virtually all the Council of Europe's member States. These communities are often misunderstood by the rest of the population. The word "Rom" comes from the word "Dom", which means "human being" in the Romani language. For Roma communities to fully exercise all the rights of a human being and to combat intolerance or anti-Gypsyism, the Council of Europe is committed to making sure that Roma communities are not excluded or badly treated.

*"Travelling is going from self to self, passing through others." As this touareg proverb points out, travel promotes the understanding of cultures. The Council of Europe has coupled up with the International Union of Railways to help less fortunate young people get themselves on track to travel to international events.*

## Viewing history

History comes in a lot of different versions, so how is it to be taught? In any country there have been times when history textbooks were full of biased opinions and false interpretations, particularly regarding occurrences involving neighbouring countries. Once the Berlin wall came down and Europe was no longer divided into two blocs, the Council of Europe encouraged its member States to provide school pupils with history teaching that was more alive, free of stereotypes and more in touch with issues of European civilisation and culture.

## Expanding memory

In 2001 the Council of Europe launched a project called "Teaching remembrance" to help give school pupils a better grasp of events in European and world history, particularly the Holocaust during the Second World War and all the genocides and crimes against humanity perpetrated in the 20th century.

## Mobile connections for youth

The Council of Europe invites young people to come along and discuss topics such as human rights education and intercultural dialogue. Youth leaders from various countries meet up in the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg (France) and Budapest (Hungary) for training programmes. They exchange ideas and experiences to gain a better understanding of what diversity is about.



# CULTURE

connecting with

# Nature

Cultural diversity and biodiversity are closely connected and should be celebrated in all our societies.

The Council of Europe sees culture as the "**soul of democracy**" and develops cultural policies aimed at:

- ① promoting human rights
- ② getting citizens to participate
- ③ bringing people together
- ④ reaching beyond borders thanks to common projects
- ⑤ asserting the diversity of cultures and identities
- ⑥ sharing the past
- ⑦ preventing conflicts.

The **European Cultural Convention**, adopted in 1954, is the medium for European cooperation in the areas of culture, education, youth and sport.

The **intercultural cities programme** is an initiative coordinated by the Council of Europe. It encourages cities to use their multiculturalism to positively manage conflicts and violence that might arise as a result of the great diversity of their communities. All manner of initiatives are encouraged: discussion workshops on cultures, world music festivals, mediators in hospitals, football tournaments etc

## Screen-saver

Eurimages supports European films which best reflect the diversity of the continent. Over 1 200 full-length features and documentaries have received support from this foundation set up by the Council of Europe, and some of them have received awards at the most prestigious festivals.





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

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

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

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



## Walking in their steps

We can trace our ancestors' activities through the archaeological footprints they left behind them.

The Council of Europe's **Cultural routes** programme features these traces of the past in guided routes following the paths trodden by generations of travellers over the centuries.

The Council of Europe has sketched out 25 routes going through numerous countries, each and every one of them a celebration of our common cultural heritage: Routes featuring the olive tree, Vikings, Don Quixote, Mozart and the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrims are just a few examples.

## Access your heritage

Once a year museums, historical buildings and other cultural sites open their doors to give the citizens of 49 countries an exceptional view inside. These are the **European Heritage days**, an initiative launched by the Council of Europe in 1991.

Whether it concerns the built environment, archaeological vestiges, movable assets, landscape or local know-how, cultural heritage forms by its very nature a major component of our living context and our environment. Ever since drafting the **Framework Convention on the value of cultural heritage for society**, the Council of Europe has argued the case that heritage should leave room for human progress, while preserving:

- ⦿ substantial cultural and landscape diversity
- ⦿ dialogue between citizens of different cultures, working together to make heritage part and parcel of everyday life
- ⦿ sustainable enjoyment of heritage, so that future generations can benefit from it too.



## Protected spaces and species

Greater Europe is also home to many forms of wildlife and their natural habitats. Thirty years ago, the Council of Europe introduced the **Bern Convention** to ensure the conservation of natural habitats and vulnerable wild flora and fauna, from invertebrates up to large carnivores, including migratory species.

## Biodiversity and climate change

The Council of Europe strives to soften the impact of climate change on biological diversity, giving opinions and guidance to States so that they take the right kind of environmental policies on board.

## Landscape format

Landscapes are meeting points between culture and nature, evolving in time under the combined influence of natural forces and human activity. The Council of Europe gives pointers to its States on how to let landscapes evolve harmoniously while reflecting European diversity.

## Landscapes are also:

- our day-to-day environment
- the urban or rural world
- the land or water that surrounds us







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

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

[www.coe.in/EPAS](http://www.coe.in/EPAS)



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## Time out!

In many sports time out is called to ease tensions and give the teams a break.

In the ancient world a truce was called between warring Greek cities during the Olympic games. But today, sport is all too often a pretext for violence between rival sides: insults, threats, physical violence, racist and xenophobic attitudes and comments. So the Council of Europe has called time out on spectator violence in stadiums, particularly at football matches. In the wake of the Heysel stadium tragedy in 1985 which left dozens of supporters dead or seriously injured on the terraces, the Council of Europe adopted the **European Convention on spectator violence** that same year, setting out a package of measures to be taken by the States to prevent situations getting out of hand.





# WINDOWS open...

... on the rest of the world

The North-South Centre in Lisbon (Portugal) relays the Council of Europe's ideas beyond our continent and focuses on topics linked to solidarity and globalisation. Young people are central to its activities.

[www.nscentre.org](http://www.nscentre.org)

## ... on the international scene

The Council of Europe cooperates with other organisations, particularly in the spheres of human rights, democracy and the rule of law:

- **the European Union (EU)**, which has 27 Member States and a long tradition of cooperation with the Council of Europe. On a base of shared values, these two organisations mutually benefit from each other's strengths and expertise.

[www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)

- **the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** working in areas such as combating terrorism, protecting national minorities and fighting against human trafficking.

[www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)

- **the United Nations Organisation (UN)** working in areas such as promoting and protecting children's rights, combating violence against women and preventing torture.

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)







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

check out the hip-hop version  
of the European anthem  
recorded in 2004

# Symbols of Greater Europe

**12 gold stars** on a blue background.

The European flag was adopted by the Council of Europe back in 1955. The European Union's institutions have been using the same flag since 1986. The number 12 refers to perfection, the months of the year, the apostles or the mythological works of Hercules. The stars form a circle to symbolise unity.

The official European anthem is an excerpt from the prelude to the "Ode to joy" from Beethoven's 9th Symphony, with an arrangement by Herbert von Karajan, adopted by the Council of Europe in 1972 and later by the European Union. Other arrangements have been recorded since, including for symphony orchestra, organ, piano (classical and jazz), rock guitar, jazz violin, techno and trance.



The Council of Europe has had its headquarters in Strasbourg since 1949. The "European district" is also home to other institutions, such as the EU's European Parliament.



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

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