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| **Priorities of the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (21 May – 17 November 2021)** |

Hungary assumes the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the second time in the thirty years since its accession to the Organisation. Twenty-two years after the adoption of the “Budapest Declaration for a Greater Europe without dividing lines” at the 104th Session of the Committee of Ministers on 7th May 1999, Hungary continues to believe that “the Council of Europe is the pre-eminent political institution capable of bringing together, on an equal footing and in permanent structures, all the countries of Greater Europe”.

Recalling the Council of Europe's mission to build a freer, more tolerant and just society based on solidarity, common values and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity, Hungary will seek to further promote and strengthen human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

It is in this spirit that the Hungarian Presidency will aim at continuing to consolidate the stability of Europe based on democratic institutions; seeking to strengthen the political, legal, social and cultural cohesion of our continent and combatting the divisive factors constituted by intolerance – whether political, cultural or religious – and discrimination against minorities.

Hungary wishes to use the opportunity afforded by the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers to help strengthen the community of culture formed by a Europe enriched by its diversity, confident in its identity and open to the world. In addition to longstanding traditional commitments, Hungary would also like to promote the ongoing work on our common responses to new challenges faced by modern societies, such as the rapid development of new technologies. Conscious of the responsibilities towards present and future generations to safeguard a healthy and high quality environment, the Hungarian Presidency would like to promote the existing tools of the Council of Europe in this field and the ongoing deliberations related to environmental challenges. In the spirit of this future-oriented approach, the Hungarian Presidency would also like to put a special focus on future generations, children and youth, building on the unique experience and knowledge of our Organisation in these fields.

In light of the above, the Hungarian Presidency will focus particularly on five themes: 1) promoting the effective protection of national minorities, 2) interreligious dialogue, 3) “next generation”: children’s rights, youth participation, and Roma[[1]](#footnote-1) inclusion, 4) technological and 5) environmental challenges.

In the hope that we can soon leave behind the constraints and hardships suffered over the past months of the pandemic, Hungary intends to underpin its Presidency priorities by offering a rich cultural program in Strasbourg outlined in the annex of the document.

In addition, the Hungarian Presidency will support the daily work of the Organisation with focusing on many other important topics on the agenda of the Council of Europe and taking forward the work of previous Presidencies and in the spirit of constructive cooperation with all bodies and institutions of our Organisation.

**Promoting the effective protection of national minorities**

The Hungarian Presidency wishes to highlight the importance of the effective protection of national minorities in Europe through a series of five events organised in Strasbourg and Budapest on the topic.

The first high-level conference at the end of June in Strasbourg will aim at highlighting the Council of Europe's legal standards for the protection of persons belonging to national minorities and their languages. The goal is to evaluate the results achieved so far, including through the reforms launched in 2018 under the Croatian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, and to identify the remaining challenges with the participation of senior government and Council of Europe officials, as well as the involvement of experts in the field of national minority protection.

The second presidency event in this field aims to examine the role and contribution of non-governmental organizations and research centres in promoting the protection of national minorities. This event will also provide an opportunity to present the work of the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination (CDADI) on the political participation of national minority youth.

The third planned event will be an expert meeting on respective good practices, including bilateral co-operation and the functioning of self-government models in the Council of Europe region.

A further conference is envisaged with international participation focusing on the protection of national minorities living in Hungary, offering an opportunity to also follow up on recent relevant monitoring reports.

The closing high-level event of the Hungarian Presidency in this priority area is planned on the particular role and responsibility of the Council of Europe, as well as other international organizations. The event will provide a forum for political leaders and experts to share their ideas and suggestions for future action, on the basis of which a declaration will be elaborated focusing in particular on visions for the future in the field of protection of national minorities.

**Interreligious Dialogue highlighting the important role of intercultural dialogue in tackling intolerance**

The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue aims to strengthen mutual respect, understanding and tolerance in European society at a pan-European level. Interfaith dialogue formed an important part of the yearly calendar of the Committee of Ministers from 2008 to 2017 and was addressed in several of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The issue of relaunching this topic has been inspired by the discussions in the Committee of Ministers and its rapporteur groups. The Hungarian Presidency aims to give new impetus to these deliberations in cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Antisemitic, Anti-Muslim and other forms of religious intolerance and hate crimes.

A side event is planned on the margins of the Fourth Part Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in September with the participation of relevant international NGOs and the involvement of the Hungary Helps Program. The aim of this event will be to highlight the relations between humanitarian aid and religious freedom and the way humanitarian aid aims to help religious communities in general, and persecuted Christians in particular. It will also address the wider impact of these activities on society as a whole in the Southern Neighbourhood of the Council of Europe.

Subsequently, a symposium is planned with the participation of government officials and religious leaders to examine the complex issue of religious pluralism with regard to inter-culturalism, and to discuss common values, the shared responsibility of religions and denominations, as well as related challenges of the 21st century.

An informal exchange of views within the Committee of Ministers is under consideration as a follow-up to the informal exchange organized by the German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in March.

**Next Generation: a special emphasis on protection of family values, youth policy, children's rights, as well as social inclusion and opportunities for the Roma people**

The global crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic and social impacts have disrupted nearly all aspects of life for all groups in society. For children and youth, the pandemic poses considerable risks in the fields of education, employment and mental health. With this in mind, the Hungarian Presidency will host a series of events highlighting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on children and young people with a special focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as Roma. Hungary is committed to the goals of the Council of Europe’s strategies and action plans in these fields, which commitment is also underlined by hosting the European Youth Centre in Budapest since 1995.

The Hungarian Presidency is aware that protection of the rights of the child and support for families is a key component for the development and functioning of society, as illustrated by the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), adopted by the Committee of Ministers five years ago.

Children and young people face several challenges caused by the digital world, which has been even more prominent since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis. The development of digital competences will be an important topic for discussion at a conference on the rights and opportunities of children and young people in the digital age with a special focus on the digitalised educational environment and issues related to privacy. The event will also provide an occasion to reflect on the results reached with regard to the fifth priority area of the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) that is the rights of the child in the digital environment. An informal exchange of views within the Committee of Ministers is under consideration related to the preparation of the next strategy for the rights of the child.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also had significant impact on the lives of young people making the implementation of the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030 even more important. A seminar titled “ReStart, ReNew, ReIntegrate – Opportunities for young people after coronavirus” will be organized gathering experts, government officials and young people to engage in dialogue and make recommendations for supporting and reintegrating youth in the field of employment after the pandemic. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss the impact of youth mobility on education and to understand how European Youth Card services can adapt to new realities. The Hungarian Presidency will also organize the Budapest Volunteer Summit giving support to volunteering, as a means of non-formal learning. The expert level event will provide an opportunity to explore different aspects of volunteering and will aim to present best practices in this field.

The social integration of disadvantaged children, with a special focus on Roma, will be the subject of the conference titled “From Birth to Employment”. The conference will be closely linked to the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) and look at topics related to education, disadvantaged schools, scholarship schemes, and will reflect on the developments of the past ten years, including Hungarian good practices of the so-called “Safe Start” children’s houses and the system of Roma vocational colleges. The conference will also provide an opportunity to present Roma role models as a means to fight antigypsism and to promote inclusion, also drawing attention to the opportunities for disadvantaged Roma and non-Roma youth through appropriate support services for the benefit of society as a whole. During its Presidency, Hungary will also host the 4th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) in Budapest.

The Hungarian Presidency supports the work of the Pompidou Group, the Council of Europe’s drug policy platform and expects that its draft revised statute will be adopted by the Committee of Ministers in due time for the Group’s 50th anniversary. The Hungarian Presidency intends to ensure a proper representation of the Committee of Ministers at the high-level anniversary celebration planned to take place at the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

**Technological challenges: justice in the digital age, artificial intelligence, fight against cybercrime**

As a follow-up to the ministerial conference organised by the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, a conference of the Ministers of Justice of the Council of Europe Member States will be held in Budapest in October. The ministerial exchange will provide an opportunity to discuss further challenges and achievements related to the digitalization of justice and the application of artificial intelligence for judicial purposes. The Ministerial Conference will build on the diverse work of the Organisation on justice, information society, algorithms and artificial intelligence, in particular the results of the work of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) and the Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI).

With the goal of developing pan-European solutions based on best practices for the most pressing technological challenges of cross-border legal proceedings, an expert meeting (roundtable) will be held for the first time within the framework of the Council of Europe. The roundtable will bring together professionals responsible for the development and operation of the national judicial IT systems of the Council of Europe Member States. The Hungarian Presidency expects the event to contribute to the creation of a collaborative platform, which at the outset will focus on the criminal law field, in the framework of which forensic IT professionals can continue to seek answers to the challenges of digitalisation. The outcome of the deliberations at the expert meeting will enrich the debate at the Conference of the Ministers of Justice.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is, perhaps, the most important breakthrough technology of this century. Its applications are not only changing our daily life or the way we work or interact in society, but also our perception of the world. Its human impact has led all stakeholders to produce non-binding frameworks to ensure human-centred and trustworthy AI design, development and application. The Council of Europe is at the heart of the construction of a global policy to regulate the design and use of AI systems, coordinated with other international organisations.

Hungary is committed to the work carried out by the Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) that is due to be completed at the end of 2021. To lend its support to the ongoing efforts, the Hungarian Presidency intends to organise a high-level expert conference building on the excellent events organised by the Finnish and the German Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers. This conference will be an opportunity for a multi-stakeholder and inclusive dialogue around Council of Europe initiatives in the field of AI regulation, including the CAHAI feasibility study and their relevance and usefulness for national policies.

The Budapest Convention on Cybercrime will celebrate its 20th anniversary in November. The Hungarian Presidency would like to play a strong role in the celebration of this anniversary in conjunction with the Octopus Conference of the Council of Europe. It is closely following the preparation of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime that is to address complex questions of crime, jurisdiction, rule of law and human rights in cyberspace and supports its adoption by November coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the Convention.

**Environment: European landscape protection, protection of habitats, fundamental right to a healthy environment, sustainable development**

The environmental emergency, and especially climate change are among the greatest threats to human rights in our age. Continuing the process started by the Georgian Presidency, the Hungarian Presidency will also aim to strengthen environmental protection work in the Council of Europe through its existing instruments to secure better human rights protection standards in member States.

The 11th Conference on the European Landscape Convention under the auspices of the Hungarian Presidency will discuss the environmental, social, cultural and economic dimensions of landscapes. An important development under the Hungarian Presidency will be the opening of the Landscape Convention for non-European states.

Events organised within the Council of Europe will also provide an excellent opportunity to promote synergies between the efforts of the different institutions and bodies of the Organisation in this field. The issue of environment and human rights is a political priority for the Parliamentary Assembly that will be highlighted during its Fourth Part Session in 2021. The next World Forum for Democracy in November will engage in a debate on related topics and generate new ideas for tackling the environmental crisis we are facing today. The “12 Months, 1 Question” campaign in the run-up to it focusing on an ongoing global conversation around one environment-related theme each month is also an opportunity for cooperation and discussion.

The Hungarian Presidency will support and promote the important intergovernmental work carried out in the field of human rights and the environment by the Steering Committee of Human Rights (CDDH-ENV) and the Working Group on the Environment and Criminal Law of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC-EC).

**Annex**

**Calendar of main activities during the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers**

*(Subject to developments in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic)*

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| **Date** | | **Event** | **Location** |
| 26-27 | May | 11th Conference of the Landscape Convention | online |
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| 10-11 | June | Conference of Media Ministers: “Artificial intelligence – Intelligent politics: Challenges and opportunities for media and democracy” organised by the Council of Europe and the Republic of Cyprus | Online |
| 29 | June | High-level conference: “Norms and standards of the Council of Europe related to the rights of national minorities: results and challenges” | Strasbourg/hybrid |
| 1-2 | July | Annual Conference of the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP Network Conference) | online |
| 7 | September | Conference: “National minority rights on the agenda of NGOs and research institutes” | Budapest/hybrid |
| 7-14 | September | Enter! – Training course on access to social rights for young people | Strasbourg |
| 16-17 | September | Conference on Cross-Border Co-operation | Budapest |
| 17 | September | Bureau Meeting of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe | Balatonfüred |
| 22 | September | Conference on Foster Care | Budapest/hybrid |
| 22-24 | September | Conference on Roma inclusion: “From early childhood to profession” | Budapest |
| 28 | September | Fourth part of the 2021 Session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly: side event “Freedom of religion and humanitarian aid” | Strasbourg |
| 29-30 | September | 1st Consultation of the Parties of the Tromsø Convention | Strasbourg |
| 30  1 | September -  October | Eurimages Conference: “Preserving independent production, diversity and pluralism in TV series in Europe” | Budapest |

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| 4 | October | Roundtable of legal IT experts of Member States in the criminal law field | Budapest/hybrid |
| 4-5 | October | Conference of Ministers of Justiceon the digitalization of justice and the application of artificial intelligence for judicial purposes | Budapest |
| 4-7 | October | Multi sectoral co-operation for inclusion of Roma youth and marginalised groups |  |
| 5 | October | Conference: “Best practices in the field of national minority rights” | Budapest |
| 6-8 | October | Budapest Talent Summit | Budapest |
| 7-8 | October | Conference: “Rights, opportunities and well-being of children and young people in the digital age” | Budapest/hybrid |
| 13-15 | October | Conference: “Slow” and environmental friendly tourism in Europe” | online |
| 13-15 | October | Conference: “Pillars of modern age Europe – coexistence of religious communities” | Debrecen |
| 15 | October | Meeting of the Government Agents representing States before the European Court of Human Rights | Budapest |
| 17-24 | October | Training course for educators using Human Rights Education with children based on “Compasito” | Budapest |
| 19 | October | Conference: “National minority identities in diverse societies: European Perspectives” | Strasbourg/hybrid |
| 20 | October | National symposium on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention in Hungary on the occasion of the International Landscape Day | Budapest |
| 26 | October | 2021 Artificial Intelligence Governance Conference | Budapest/hybrid |
| 27-29 | October | Seminar: “ReStart, ReNew, ReIntegrate – Opportunities for young people after coronavirus” | Budapest/hybrid |
| 27-29 | October | 4th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) | Budapest/hybrid |

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| 28-29 | October | 18th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies organised by the Venice Commission | online |
| 28 | October | 50th Anniversary of the Pompidou Group | Paris |
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| 4-5 | November | Conference: “National minorities in Hungary: protection and passing on of national minority values” | Budapest |
| 4-5 | November | Budapest Volunteer Summit | Budapest/hybrid |
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| 8-10 | November | 9th World Forum for Democracy – “Can Democracy Save the Environment?” | Strasbourg |
| 15-17 | November | High-Level Conference on the 20th Anniversary of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime – Octopus Conference | TBC |
| 17 | November | Handover of the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from Hungary to Italy | Strasbourg |

**Calendar of cultural events planned by the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg/Alsace and online**

*(Subject to developments in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic)*

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| **Date** | | **Event** | **Location** |
| 26  30 | May -  June | Magical Hungary – nature photo exhibition  https://magicalhungary.com/ | Online and in Palais  de l’Europe |
| 2 | June | Opening piano concert of János Balázs | online on social  media channels  of the Hungarian  Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
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| 11 | June | Digital P.E. class LIVE | Livestreamed in  primary schools  in Member States |
| 21  9 | June –  July | Exhibition on the architecture of the  Hungarian Parliament Building  (opening during the third part of the 2021 Session  of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly) | Palais de l’Europe |
| 29 | June | Concert of flutist János Bálint accompanied  by pianist József Balog | Palais de l’Europe |

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| 8 | July | Tokaji wine dinner | Kintzheim, Château  de Confrérie Saint-Etienne |
| 15  10 | September – October | Outdoor exhibition of Cultural Routes in Hungary – opening of European Heritage Days | La presqu'île Malraux |
| 22  22 | September – October | Cross-in-Fire exhibition: Christian Persecution  in the Middle East | Palais de l’Europe |
| 24-25 | September | Celebration of European Day of Languages:  concert and workshops | Ecole Européenne  de Strasbourg |
| 29 | September | Concert of the Virtuosos  (during the fourth part of the 2021 Session  of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly) | Pavillon Josephine |
| 5  10 | October –  November | Outdoor photo exhibition of  nature photographer Bence Máté | Place du Château |
| 11-24 | October | Hungarian Film Festival –  Feminine Perspective | Feature films:  Cinéma Odyssée  Documentary films:  Palais de l’Europe |
| 15 | October | An Evening with Karády – musical theatre piece | Cinéma Odyssée |
| 16 | October | Harmoni(c)a in Europe – concert | Cinéma Odyssée |
| 18  15 | October –  November | Hungarian Design Weeks | Lieu d’Europe |
| 19 | October | Concert of Strasbourg Philharmonique Orchestra | Salle de l’Aubette |
| 25-29 | October | Exhibition on Veszprém-Balaton 2023 –  European Capital of Culture | Palais de l’Europe |
| 26 | October | Fashion show of designer Erika Kovács | Palais de l’Europe |
| 10 | November | Screening of the Hungarian film “On the quiet” in connection with the European Day on protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (18 November) | Palais de l’Europe |
| 16 | November | Closing event with the Hungarian  National Folk Ensemble | Palais de la Musique  et des Congrès |

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 Travellers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)