

“Human Rights Defenders in the Council of Europe area: current challenges and new responses”

Side-event sponsored by Egidijus Vareikis, MP (LT, EPP), Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in the Council of Europe member states, and organized by the Human Rights Committee of the Conference of INGOs

Tuesday 23 January, from 13.00 to 14.15, Room 2, Palais de l'Europe

Draft Programme

Moderator: *Florian Irminger, Head of Advocacy, Human Rights House Foundation*

1. Opening
Simon Matthijssen, Chair of the Human Rights Committee of the Conference of INGOs Egidijus Vareikis, MP (LT, EPP), Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in the Council of Europe member states, PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
2. Situation of human rights defenders in Europe: how has it changed over the last 10 years?
Maria Chichtchenkova, Protection coordinator for Europe and Central Asia, Front Line Defenders
3. What can the international NGOs do to address the threats and challenges faced by human rights defenders on the ground?
Rita Patrício, Senior Executive Officer for the Council of Europe, Amnesty International
4. Discussion:
 - *What have been the efforts of intergovernmental organizations (in particular, the Council of Europe) and individual states to address the risks and challenges that human rights defenders face and improve their situation? How successful were they?*
 - *What are the gaps in and deficiencies of the existing mechanisms and programmes to protect and support human rights defenders in European countries? How could they be strengthened?*
5. Presentation of the proposals on improving the Council of Europe's framework for protecting human rights defenders developed by the Conference's Working Group on HRDs
Mr. Konstantin Baranov, member of the Coordinating Council, international Youth Human Rights Movement
6. Conclusions