



Information Documents

SG/Com(2019)1343

4 April 2019¹

Dialogue with the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General at the 1343rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (4 April 2019)

Dialogue with the Secretary General

1. Meetings in Strasbourg

Ms Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality of Georgia, 27 March

2. Events outside Strasbourg

Public lecture "The continued fight: upholding human rights standards in Europe" at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), London (United Kingdom), 28 March

Working visit to Helsinki (Finland), 3 April

- Meeting between the Presidential Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Bureau of the Committee of Ministers
- Mr Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland
- Mr Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers

¹ This document has been classified restricted at the date of issue; it will be declassified in accordance with Resolution Res(2001)6 on access to Council of Europe documents.

Dialogue with the Deputy Secretary General

1. Events outside Strasbourg

Conference “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism”, Helsinki (Finland), 28 March

On Thursday 28 March in Helsinki, I opened, together with the Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services of Finland, Ms Annika Saarikko, the International Conference “Tackling Gender Stereotypes and Sexism”, organised in the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. The Conference focused on three areas: 1) Countering stereotypical forces at work and in the public space; 2) Violence, sexual harassment and sexist hate speech as manifestations of the harmful effects of gender stereotypes; 3) Tackling gender stereotypes and sexist images of gender – online and in the media. The discussions aimed at strengthening co-operation and synergies amongst participants and institutions (policy makers from international organisations, *Gender Equality* rapporteurs, civil society representatives, women’s rights’ experts, journalists and other relevant stakeholders).

The Conference started the day after the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of our Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism which contains the first internationally agreed definition of sexism, helps identifying different manifestations of sexist behaviours and suggests specific measures in the areas of language and communication, media, the workplace, the public and the private spheres. As I noted in interviews in Helsinki, “the recommendation will work as an accelerator to understand where this problem comes from and how it should be tackled”.

12th European Forum on the rights of the child: Where we are and where we want to go?, Brussels (Belgium), 2 April

On Tuesday 2 April, I opened, together with the European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Ms Věra Jourová; and European Parliament Coordinator and Spokesperson for the rights of the child, Ms Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, the 12th European Forum on the rights of the child in Brussels, an annual conference organised by the European Commission with key actors promoting good practices in this field.

Thirty years after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, those rights are better protected, at least in Europe. Both the Council of Europe and the EU have contributed to this positive trend. We have established platforms for intergovernmental co-operation; we have adopted co-ordination structures that help to mainstream children’s rights in our policy-making processes and we have engaged in joint action. However, we still fall short of the standards to which our children are entitled. Events like this Forum, and the high level conference on the same subject that the Council of Europe’s French chairmanship will organise in Paris, in November this year, are opportunities to tell us what more must be done to amplify our impact for the protection of human rights of children across our continent and beyond.

During my visit, I also had a very productive meeting with Mr Maarten Verwey, Director-General of the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) to discuss our upcoming new co-operation framework agreement to provide support to a number of EU and Council of Europe member states under the SRSS Programme. The first projects under this agreement will cover efficiency of justice, children's rights and local governance. All the projects have been developed in close consultation with beneficiary member states ensuring they are tailor-made to meet the beneficiaries' needs.

Finally, I met with the staff in our Council of Europe Office in Brussels. I thank Ambassador Zoltan Taubner and his team for the organisation of my visit.

Rencontre avec une délégation de haut niveau du Maroc, présente à Strasbourg à l'occasion de la 36e Session du Congrès, 3 avril

Le 3 avril, à l'occasion de la 36e session du Congrès, j'ai rencontré une délégation de représentants des pouvoirs locaux et régionaux et des ministères marocains impliqués dans le processus de régionalisation avancée au Maroc. Elle était composée de M. Mhand Laanser, Président de l'Association des Régions du Maroc et Ancien Ministre de l'Urbanisme et de l'Aménagement du territoire national, Mme Fatna Khyel, Secrétaire d'Etat auprès du Ministre de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville, chargée de l'Habitat, M. Mohamed Boudra, Président de l'Association Marocaine des Présidents des Conseils Préfectoraux et Provinciaux, et M. Abdelouahab El Jabri, Gouverneur Central, chargé de la coopération internationale à la Direction générale des Collectivités Territoriales, Ministère de l'Intérieur, et le Consul Général du Maroc à Strasbourg.

Nous avons évoqué la coopération entre le Conseil de l'Europe et le Maroc dans le cadre global du Partenariat de Voisinage 2018-2021, ainsi que les perspectives de coopération dans le cadre du nouveau statut de « Partenaire pour la démocratie locale » octroyé par le Congrès au Royaume du Maroc lors de cette session. Ce statut vise notamment à développer le dialogue politique entre élus, à renforcer la coopération sous forme d'assistance et expertise législatives, et à soutenir le développement de la démocratie participative. Nous avons également évoqué le rôle des femmes et de la jeunesse dans ce processus, ainsi que les attentes concrètes de la population marocaine.

2. Signatures and Ratifications

Brunei Darussalam ratified the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters as amended by the 2010 Protocol (ETS No. 127), 28 March.

3. Voluntary Contributions

I would like to thank our donors for their support to our work and mention the recent voluntary contributions which I have had the pleasure to sign².

Cyprus

The Government of Cyprus has made a voluntary contribution of €5,000 to support projects implemented by the Parliamentary Assembly on empowering and protecting children through parliamentary action, promoting public health through parliamentary action, the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, the Parliamentary Network “Women Free from Violence” as well as the Handbook for national parliaments as guarantors of human rights in Europe.

Cyprus has also contributed €4,762.68 towards the fight against offences relating to cultural property.

Finland

The Government of Finland has made a non-earmarked voluntary contribution of €569,661.23 to support the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021.

France

Le gouvernement de la France a accordé une contribution volontaire de 28 940,75 € pour réduire l'arriéré d'affaires bien fondées de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme ainsi que pour combattre la violence à l'égard des femmes.

Italie

Le gouvernement de l'Italie a versé une contribution volontaire de 80 161,33 € pour soutenir la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action du Conseil de l'Europe sur la protection des enfants réfugiés et migrants en Europe (portant ainsi leur soutien à ce plan d'action à un total de 398 161,63 €).

Montenegro

The Government of Montenegro has made a voluntary contribution of €3,000 to support the Venice Commission’s action to promote the development of democratic institutions based on respect for the rule of law and human rights.

Netherlands

The Government of the Netherlands has made a voluntary contribution of €40,000 to support the Council of Europe’s Campaign “Free to Speak, Safe to Learn” – Democratic schools for all.

Norway

The Government of Norway has made a voluntary contribution of €620,026.87 towards reducing the European Court of Human Rights backlog of well-founded cases.

² Agreements signed from 2 March – 1 April 2019. Subsequent signatures will be communicated in the next monthly update.

European Union

The European Union has made a voluntary contribution of €4,500,000 to the Joint Programme “Strengthening the Criminal Justice System and the Capacity of Justice Professionals on prevention of the European Convention on Human Rights Violations in Turkey”.

Human Rights Trust Fund (HRTF)³

The Human Rights Trust Fund has made a voluntary contribution of €600,000 to strengthen prison healthcare in Greece and up to €320,000 to enhance the effectiveness of Civil Monitoring Boards in line with European standards in Turkey.

Canada

The Government of Canada has made a voluntary contribution of 5 million Canadian dollars (approximately €3,355,720) to support the Council of Europe’s Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021.

Zurich University of Teacher Education

The Zurich University of Teacher Education has made a voluntary contribution of 95,000 Swiss francs (approximately €83,798) to support the Council of Europe’s Campaign “Free to Speak, Safe to Learn” – Democratic schools for all.

³ Seven member states contribute to the HRTF (Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).