

## Information Documents

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### **Speaking Notes of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General to the 1490th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (21 February 2024)**

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#### **Secretary General**

##### **Item 1.3**

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2. High-level technical mission of the Secretariat to Ankara, Türkiye

#### **Deputy Secretary General**

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1. Échange avec des étudiants de l'Institut d'études politiques de Strasbourg, 15 février
2. Meeting with Professor Masahiro Sogabe, Graduate School of Law, Kyoto University, 16 February
3. Opening of the photo exhibition "The DAWN" by French-Ukrainian photographer Yury Bilak, 19 February

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## **Secretary General**

### **1. Décès d'Alexeï Navalny**

Monsieur le Président, permettez-moi de revenir sur ma déclaration d'indignation et de consternation de la semaine dernière à propos du décès d'Alexeï Navalny. C'était la dernière d'une série de déclarations que j'ai faites par le passé sur sa situation. Les autorités russes doivent mener une enquête immédiate et approfondie et rendre les résultats accessibles au public, conformément à leurs obligations internationales. La mort tragique de Monsieur Navalny n'est pas seulement un rappel brutal du mépris total de la Russie pour les droits humains de ses propres citoyens, mais aussi un témoignage du prix élevé à payer pour défendre les valeurs des droits humains, de la démocratie et de l'État de droit. Je réitère nos sincères condoléances et notre solidarité à sa famille et à ses collègues.

### **2. High-level technical mission of the Secretariat to Ankara, Türkiye**

In line with the spirit of the Reykjavík Declaration, our intensified dialogue with the Turkish authorities is ongoing. During my visit to Türkiye on 13 November last year, I agreed with the Minister for Foreign Affairs that high-level technical contacts should take place in 2024 to explore ways to ensure the implementation of the Court's Judgments.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that a high-level Secretariat technical mission travelled to Ankara on 15 February, led by the Director General of DG1, Christos Giakoumopoulos.

I would like to thank the Turkish authorities for making this mission possible and for their open and sincere co-operation.

I am told it has been a fruitful exchange with the active participation of a large delegation from the Turkish authorities, including very high-level representation from various directorates of the Ministry of Justice. Several options were explored.

The Director General will provide you with more information on the details discussed at the meeting. In the meantime, the technical discussions will continue with a view to securing the implementation of the European Court's judgments.

## **Deputy Secretary General**

### **1. Échange avec des étudiants de l'Institut d'études politiques de Strasbourg, 15 février**

Jeudi dernier, j'ai échangé pendant deux heures avec les étudiants de Sciences Po Strasbourg.

Cette rencontre s'est tenue à la demande de leur association, qui a souhaité organiser un séminaire sur le Conseil de l'Europe dans le cadre de leur année académique.

J'ai été très encouragé par leur intérêt pour les priorités du Conseil de l'Europe comme l'intelligence artificielle, la Convention d'Istanbul et nos travaux pour et avec l'Ukraine. J'ai été également très inspiré par leurs questions et commentaires sur le rôle du Conseil de l'Europe dans les enjeux géopolitiques actuels, ainsi que sur l'importance de l'exclusion de la Russie de notre Organisation.

Je pense qu'il est important que nous nous adressions de cette manière aux jeunes et aux étudiants, afin d'améliorer la compréhension et la visibilité de notre Organisation. Je sais que certains d'entre vous – en particulier Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Pap Ndiaye – l'ont fait dans vos capitales respectives. Continuons sur notre lancée.

## **2. Meeting with Professor Masahiro Sogabe, Graduate School of Law, Kyoto University, 16 February**

On 16 February, I had a meeting with Professor Masahiro Sogabe who teaches constitutional law at the Graduate School of Law at Kyoto University.

Professor Sogabe's visit was aimed at building bridges between Japanese legal academics and the Council of Europe to make our standards more visible in Japan and in other parts of Asia.

We also discussed the fact that Japan's Supreme Court has referred in recent decisions to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.

Since Professor Sogabe is the substitute observer of Japan to the Venice Commission, we also talked about the relevance of the references to the Strasbourg Court's case law in opinions by the Venice Commission delivered in respect of non-European members.

I thanked Professor Sogabe for his efforts and underlined that the strengthening of relations with our observer state, Japan, was an important priority for the Organisation.

## **3. Opening of the photo exhibition "The DAWN", by French-Ukrainian photographer Yury Bilak, 19 February**

On Monday evening, many of us gathered in the Assembly's Foyer for the opening of the exhibition "the DAWN", to mark the second anniversary of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Yury Bilak, the French-Ukrainian photographer explained to us that his photographs are intended to show what the dawn of a new life would look like for Ukrainian children whose homes, villages and towns have suffered enormously under bombardment and occupation.

This exhibition reminds us not only that behind all these statistics are individual children whose lives have been destroyed, and even taken, as a direct result of Russia's appalling crimes, but most importantly of the lives that these children should be living.

Speaking at the event, the President of the Ministers' Deputies, the Permanent Representatives of France and Ukraine, and I all highlighted that we must do everything possible to ensure that Ukrainian children have the chance to grow up in a free, democratic and vibrant Ukraine.

I am grateful to our colleagues in Amicale for their excellent work in organising this exhibition, which remains on display.

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### **Question from Ambassador Pap NDIAYE, Permanent Representative of France:**

***Mr Deputy Secretary General, how can the Council of Europe adapt its communication strategy so that students and young people in general are better informed, but also able to navigate and understand the contemporary issues of protecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law?***

Thank you very much for your question, Pap.

Our communications strategy does recognise that we need to speak to the interests and concerns of students and young people, and that we need to be where *they* are – using the modern communication channels that *they* use.

That is why we are currently making active use of Instagram, YouTube and Twitter – with a dedicated thematic X account *CoEYouth* – to showcase some of what the Council of Europe can offer to young people today.

Here we try to create engaging content for web and social media, including visuals, videos, infographics and interactive quizzes around our messages.

Beyond this, we have invested quite a lot in trying to reach out and engage young people in various ways.

Examples include:

The René Cassin and Moot Court competitions, the European Prize for Eloquence (with the *Institut d'études politiques*), in co-operation with ELSA – the law students' association (altogether we had 40 events in Europe last year).

And more recently, I believe the initiative that you took at the French delegation was excellent – where young students could work in a role play as a parliamentarian or an ambassador for one day (CoEMon).

We have certainly also the World Forum for Democracy, the Children's Forum and the Junior Crystal Scales of Justice Prize, as well as the Help programme, that gives us opportunities to communicate with and involve students, including young professionals.

We also take part in the European Parliament's Youth Event and the Educap City operation aimed at young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We also organise visits for young people to the Council of Europe, and then of course you have all the important activities we do in education and on youth in general in DGII – as well as the work of our youth centres. I will not go into that here and now, but more information can certainly also be provided on this.

Finally, also a word or two on the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe, where youth and youth participation are a targeted group:

In mid-May, and in close co-operation with the upcoming Lithuanian CM Presidency, young people from across the member states will be invited to take part in a photo and video competition entitled *Human Rights: Camera, Action!*

To reach our target audience – young people – we are organising this competition using the social networks they use.

Youth will also play a central role in the official anniversary ceremony on 16 May in the Strasbourg Opera.

Up to 120 participants of the European Youth Conference will be in the audience. In addition, a panel of youth representatives will take the floor on stage to present the topics they have discussed and the issues which they wish to communicate to European leaders. The whole ceremony will be live streamed for wide visibility.

On 29 June, I have agreed to address the baccalaureate ceremony of the European School Strasbourg. I see this not only as a gesture to show our support to the school, but also to raise awareness of the Council of Europe's work.

So, in summary, youth play a key role in our communications strategy, and with your help, ideas and contributions, we can certainly do much more.

Maybe we can, for example – and as part of the visibility project – establish together with you, a list of speakers in every country, with for example current or former PACE parliamentarians, or current and former Ambassadors, or others with an excellent knowledge of the Council of Europe, who would be able and willing to give lectures or presentations to students at universities about the Council of Europe and its work.

We could also ask our Heads of Offices to do it on a regular basis.

Maybe we can proactively take initiatives like this, or for that sake perhaps record short, engaging and informative videos in your respective languages – as Pap is doing right now in French – explaining what the Council of Europe is and what it stands for, and then publish these short videos in various social media.

I am sure many of you have other very good ideas as well, on what we should do in trying to reach out – in particular to students and young people – in a much more proactive way than we do today, as we have already seen some good examples through the ongoing visibility project.