



**Bulgarian Chairmanship**  
Council of Europe  
November 2015 – May 2016  
**Présidence de la Bulgarie**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Novembre 2015 – Mai 2016



18 April 2016

High-Level Conference of Ministers of Justice  
and representatives of the Judiciary

***Strengthening Judicial Independence and Impartiality as a Pre-condition  
for the Rule of Law in Council of Europe Member States***

Sofia, Bulgaria, 21 - 22 April 2016

**PROGRAMME**

**Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April**

9.00 - 10.00 Opening of the Conference (open to the press)

- *Mr Boïko Borissov*, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
- *Mr Daniel Mitov*, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, and Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- *Mr Thorbjørn Jagland*, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- *Mrs Ekaterina Zaharieva*, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria

Family photo

10.00 - 12.00 *Role of the judiciary in a democratic society / relations between the executive and the judiciary*

- Moderator, *Mr Philippe Boillat*, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe
- Key note speeches by *Mr Gianni Buquicchio*, President of the Venice Commission, Council of Europe and *Mrs Tiina Astola*, Director General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission
- Debate

12.00 - 12.30 Press Conference

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch

14.00 - 16.00 *Protecting the independence of individual judges and ensuring their impartiality*

- Moderator, *Ms Nino Bakakuri*, Judge of the Supreme Court of Georgia
- Key note speech by *Lord Justice Vos*, Court of Appeal of England and Wales
- Debate

16.00 - 16.30 Coffee break

16.30 - 17.45 *Council of Europe Plan of Action on strengthening judicial independence and impartiality*

- Moderator, *Ambassador Miroslav Papa*, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the Council of Europe and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Legal Co-operation
- Presentation of the Action Plan
- Debate

17.45 Close of the 1<sup>st</sup> day

## **Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

9.00 - 11.00 *Securing public trust in the judicial process*

- Moderator, *Mr Nils Engstad*, Judge at Hålogaland Court of Appeal in Norway and President of the Consultative Council of European Judges
- Key note speech by *Ms Julia Laffranque*, Judge at the European Court of Human Rights elected in respect of Estonia
- Debate

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 - 13.00 Concluding session (open to the press)

- Final remarks and questions
- *Mr Francesco Crisafulli*, General Rapporteur of the Conference, Judge at the Rome District Court (Italy)
- *Mr Philippe Boillat*, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe
- *Mrs Ekaterina Zaharieva*, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria

Close of the Conference

13.15 Lunch