

# Press Release

## Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 230a08

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

[pressunit@coe.int](mailto:pressunit@coe.int)

internet: [www.coe.int/press](http://www.coe.int/press)

47 members

Albania  
Andorra  
Armenia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Belgium  
Bosnia and  
Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Moldova  
Monaco  
Montenegro  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russia  
San Marino  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
"the former Yugoslav  
Republic of  
Macedonia"  
Turkey  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom



## Council of Europe 2008 North-South Prize goes to Kofi Annan and Simone Veil

Lisbon, 02.04.2008 – Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General and Simone Veil, the first President of the directly elected European Parliament, have received the 13<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe North-South Prize during a solemn ceremony held in Lisbon on 1 April.

The North-South Prize of the Council of Europe has been awarded every year since 1995 by the North South Centre of the Council of Europe to two candidates who have demonstrated strong and visible commitment, outstanding achievement and clear hope for the future concerning protection of human rights.

"The award which Simone Veil and Kofi Annan received today is a recognition of their contribution to dialogue between people from different countries and different parts of the world, a dialogue based on respect for human rights and a commitment to democracy, good governance and the rule of law," said Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis, addressing this year's prize winners.

"They have worked all their lives for a world in which North and South will become a matter of geography - not a matter of fate," he said.

Extending his warmest congratulations to this year's prize-winners Claude Frey, the Chairman of the North-South Centre's Executive Council, underlined that "the names of Mr. Annan and Ms. Veil served as synonyms for the struggle for human rights and that their lives became the symbols of courage and of a hope for fight for the cause of human rights."

Speaking at the event, the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Lluís Maria de Puig said: "It is a moment for all of us to recognise your efforts and to say once again that we need you and we need people like you to build more fair and human societies. Your actions are the source of inspiration, which gives us strength to believe in a better future for a mankind."

In her acceptance speech Simone Veil said "there were many challenges that must be faced and tackled" and "that the award will be a further inspiration and motivation for them to work on solving the problems the world is facing."

"This award recognises the interdependent world we all share and live in today. It promotes the values of solidarity, reconciliation and mutual respect over exclusion and mistrust and I therefore applaud your efforts to hold the North and South together. After all we are in the same boat," said Kofi Annan accepting the prize.

Echoing other speakers at the ceremony and joining them in congratulating this year's prize winners, the Portuguese President Aníbal Cavaco Silva said: "Through their tireless work this year's laureates have contributed in an outstanding way to the promotion of our shared principles on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. By upholding the highest moral standards, Mr Annan and Ms. Veil epitomise the essence of the Council of Europe North-South Prize".

./..

To receive our press releases by e-mail, contact : [Council.of.Europe.Press@coe.int](mailto:Council.of.Europe.Press@coe.int)

**A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.**

The award ceremony, which has been held this year for the thirteenth time, was attended by over 150 members of the diplomatic community, members of Portuguese Parliament and the representatives of the Council of Europe institutions and international organisations.

### ***Information about this year's winners of the North-South Centre Prize***

**Kofi Annan** of Ghana, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, has been a constant advocate for human rights, the rule of law and the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity, as well as for the Millennium Development Goals and Africa. He sought to bring the UN closer to the global public by forging ties with civil society, the private sector and other partners. One of Kofi Annan's main priorities as Secretary-General was a comprehensive programme of reform aimed at revitalising the United Nations and making the international system more effective. Kofi Annan and the UN were jointly awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize for Peace.

**Simone Veil** of France is a leading European politician and human rights activist who survived the Nazi concentration camps. Throughout her career as a magistrate and a politician, she fought to fight against all forms of discrimination. She served as French Minister for Health (1974-79), securing the passage of a liberalised abortion and contraception law in 1974. Veil was elected to the European Parliament in 1979, 1984, and 1989 and served as its first popularly elected president. She was member of the the Constitutional Council of France. She is a founding member of the Foundation for the Memory of the Shoah ("Fondation pour la mémoire da la Shoah") and served as its President until 2007.

All [winners](#) of the Prize since 1995  
[File "Council of Europe North-South Prize"](#)

#### **Contacts :**

**Fifi Benaboud**, North-South Centre ; Tel. +351 21 358 40 31/49 ; [Fifi.Benaboud@coe.int](mailto:Fifi.Benaboud@coe.int)

**Ulvi Akhundlu**, Council of Europe Press Officer, Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 26 38 ; Mob:+33(0)6 61 14 83 16;  
[Ulvi.Akhundlu@coe.int](mailto:Ulvi.Akhundlu@coe.int)