

# Media Advisory

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## Finland invites Thorbjørn Jagland to address future of human rights in Europe

**Date:** 8-9 June 2010

**Place:** Helsinki (Finland)

**Description:** At the invitation of the President of Finland, and at a critical moment for Europe, Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland will pay an official visit to Helsinki to address [major reforms](#) currently underway at the Council of Europe and their impact to human rights and 'institutional coherence' in Europe generally.

With the [Lisbon Treaty](#) committing the European Union to accede to the [European Convention on Human Rights](#), and economic pressures challenging social cohesion – 'Europe is at a crossroads', Jagland said ahead of meetings with the following Finnish officials:

- President Tarja Halonen
- the Finnish delegation to the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly
- Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen
- Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Stubb
- Minister of Migration and European Affairs Astrid Thors
- Minister for Administration and Local Government Mari Kiviniemi

"Reform will succeed if institutions work together and take advantage of their different competencies and resources to the future of peace, democracy and prosperity in Europe", he said.

The Secretary General vows to make the Council of Europe's human rights mission more relevant and focused to meet current challenges confronting Europe. He strongly supports advancing human rights to minorities, including sexual minorities and Roma people. Firmly committed to liberal democracy and freedom of expression, the Secretary General stresses the need for confidence in common European values. He has taken a clear stance against a legal ban on burqas and minarets.

"We are on the same page," Jagland said of the Council of Europe and Finland – which joined the Organisation in May 1989. 'Europe is facing unprecedented economic pressure on budgets that support initiatives for social cohesion, but nothing can or should slacken our mission to promote a multicultural Europe, defend human rights and uphold democracy and the rule of law on our continent.'

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Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
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