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47 states  
and one Organisation...

...the Council of Europe





Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

# Freedom, respect and justice - Key values for Europe

The Council of Europe, whose goal has always been greater unity between Europe's democracies, was founded on certain basic values – democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Peace and democracy are things we can never take for granted. It is up to today's young people to protect and promote them.

The Council of Europe enables young people to find out for themselves what democracy and citizenship mean, helps them care about freedom and justice, and teaches them to respect other people and the things which make them different.



## Finding out about the Council of Europe

✏ Your country is in the Council of Europe – which makes you part of a vast family of nations, stretching all the way from Iceland to Azerbaijan. In that area there are millions of other young people with experiences and interests similar to yours, but with completely different cultures.

### What is the Council of Europe?

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental political organisation, which was founded in 1949 and has 47 member states. Its job is to guarantee democracy, human rights and justice for Europeans everywhere. The Council's approach is based on co-operation and dialogue between the four official bodies it comprises: the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and the European Court of Human Rights.



Building Greater Europe  
on shared values – a few  
keywords:

human rights  
liberty  
equality  
social rights  
justice  
democracy  
tolerance  
respect  
diversity



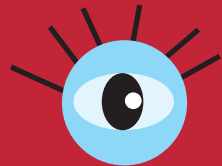
The Council of Europe is trying to come up with the answers our societies need today on:

- racism
- discrimination against minorities
- child welfare
- social exclusion
- terrorism
- organised crime and corruption
- drug addiction
- bioethics and cloning
- protection of the environment



**Budget:** The Council of Europe's work is funded by its member states, whose contributions are determined by their population and wealth. The budget for 2010 comes to 218 million euros.





# The Council of Europe's structures at a glance



The Council of Europe is, above all, a structure which can be used to tackle specific problems head-on and effectively.

● The **Committee of Ministers** is the Council of Europe's decision-making body. The ministers concerned are the member states' foreign ministers, who meet twice a year, while their permanent representatives in Strasbourg meet at least once a month. The Committee decides Council of Europe policy, draws up the work programme, and discusses proposals put to it by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Its policy decisions are embodied in European conventions or agreements and recommendations to the member states.

● The **Parliamentary Assembly** is the Council of Europe's deliberative body (i.e. it discusses texts for adoption) and the driving force behind it. It has 636 members (318 representatives and 318 substitutes) drawn from the forty-seven member parliaments and the guest delegations of non-member states. The political composition of each delegation reflects the balance in its home parliament. The Assembly holds four yearly sessions in Strasbourg and a spring session in a member state. Its recommendations to the Committee of Ministers are behind many of the Council of Europe's achievements, and its debates play a major part in shaping the Organisation's policy.

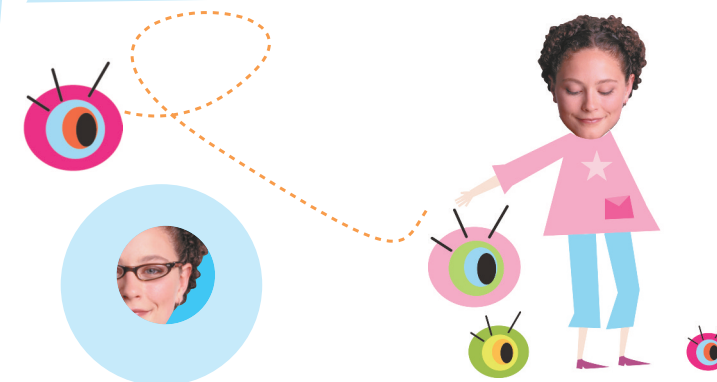


● The **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe** is the voice of local and regional democracy. Its 318 representatives and 318 substitutes speak for local and regional authorities in the member states. It has two chambers – one for local and one for regional authorities – and holds annual plenary sessions in Strasbourg. Its aim is to strengthen democratic structures at local level, particularly in the new democracies.

● The Council of Europe's **Secretary General**, elected every five years by the Parliamentary Assembly, is responsible for directing and co-ordinating the Organisation's activities.

## ● Keeping pace with progress

Change and innovation are important features of the social, scientific and cultural life in Europe today. However, with these changes also come dangers. The Council of Europe tackles these dangers by coming up with rules and conventions to protect Europeans, as well as adjusting its own priorities where necessary. Conventions are vital legal instruments – international treaties binding states to co-operate in specific areas – and the Council uses them to make life better for Europeans everywhere.



## Deciding and doing

The Council of Europe's work relies on texts agreed between its member states – conventions, recommendations, etc. – which are used to put its ideas into practice.



# Human rights in action

✎ If the Council of Europe is famous for anything, it is famous for its work on human rights.

Defending human rights, and trying every day to do it better, is one of the Council of Europe's prime functions. This is what makes the **European Convention on Human Rights**, adopted in 1950, so important. Its unique protection system covers the individual rights of some 800 million Europeans.

If you feel that a right guaranteed you by the European Convention on Human Rights has been violated, you can take your complaint to the **European Court of Human Rights**. But you must try to get justice in your own country first, using all the remedies its legal system provides for that purpose.

The **European Court of Human Rights**, which is permanently based in Strasbourg, has one judge for every member state. Judges sit in a personal capacity, and not as their countries' representatives. Applications to the Court are initially examined by a panel of three judges, which decides whether they are admissible. The Court sits as a seven-member chamber on most cases, and as a grand chamber of seventeen judges on special ones.



Chief among the rights protected by the Convention are:

- the right to life
- the right to freedom and security

- the right to a fair trial

- freedom of thought, conscience and religion

- respect for family life



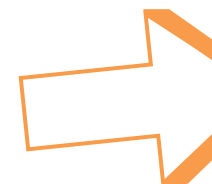
The **European Social Charter** protects the following rights, among others:

- the right to work
- the right to vocational guidance
- freedom from discrimination at work
- prohibition of forced labour
- the right to organise (trade unions)
- equality between women and men
- protection against poverty and social exclusion

The **Commissioner for Human Rights** is responsible for promoting human rights education and awareness, and ensuring that the member states respect the Council of Europe's standards.

The **European Convention against Torture** protects the rights of prison inmates, minors in special education centres, people in police or military custody, patients in mental institutions, etc. The members of the European Committee against Torture (CPT) carry out inspections in the member states to ensure that prisoners' rights are respected – and particularly to guard against torture or degrading treatment.

The **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance** engages in ongoing dialogue with national authorities, assessing the quality of member states' anti-racist policies.





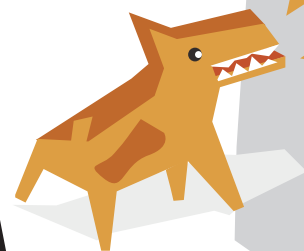
# Education - Key to your future!



Democratic citizenship, human rights, tolerance and mutual respect - these are just some of the issues covered in the many educational programmes the Council of Europe runs in its member states.

## Goals

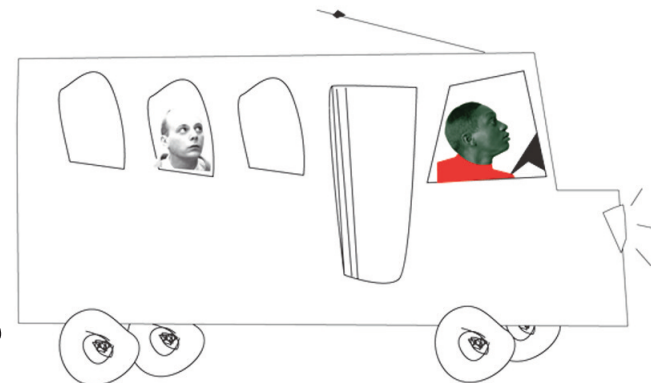
- to improve and promote education for everyone
- to publicise experimental schemes, ideas and research projects
- to promote educational links and exchanges between member states
- to secure recognition of diplomas between countries
- to disseminate information



## Education for democratic citizenship

To live in the community, people need to know their rights, face up to their responsibilities and accept that others are different.

The education for democratic citizenship project helps them to apply these vital principles.



## Languages for everyone

The Council of Europe helps its member states to set up new language programmes and encourages new approaches to language teaching and teacher training.

Its work in this area is co-ordinated by the Modern Languages Division and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz (Austria).

## Over 200 languages

**European Language Day** (26 September) helps to focus public attention on the many languages spoken in Europe (over 200!) and the value of this rich linguistic heritage. It also serves to emphasise the importance of life-long learning.

## Teaching European history

The Council of Europe has produced a series of books on teaching history in Europe, giving teachers ideas for research and the classroom – plus a new approach to teaching the history of the twentieth century – the aim being to make pupils “feel European”, while staying open to the rest of the world.

## Exporting your diplomas

If you want to work abroad, then you need to be sure your diplomas will be recognised. Equivalence is the key concept here, and the Council of Europe works to make sure it is respected.

























## Secondary school exchanges
























Under this programme, upper secondary pupils can receive grants to cover three months' study in another European country. East-West contacts are particularly encouraged, and cultural exchange is the underlying concept.





## Flags, dates of accession, member states and capitals

<b>1949</b> <b>5 May</b>	 Belgium, Brussels
	 Denmark, Copenhagen
	 France, Paris
	 Ireland, Dublin
	 Italy, Rome
	 Luxembourg, Luxembourg
	 Norway, Oslo
	 Netherlands, Amsterdam
	 United Kingdom, London
	 Sweden, Stockholm
<b>9 August</b>	 Greece, Athens
	 Turkey, Ankara
<b>1950</b> <b>7 March</b>	
	 Iceland, Reykjavik
<b>13 July</b>	
	 Germany, Berlin
<b>1956</b> <b>16 April</b>	
	 Austria, Vienna
<b>1961</b> <b>24 May</b>	
	 Cyprus, Nicosia
<b>1963</b> <b>6 May</b>	
	 Switzerland, Bern
<b>1965</b> <b>29 April</b>	
	 Malta, Valletta
<b>1976</b> <b>22 September</b>	
	 Portugal, Lisbon
<b>1977</b> <b>24 November</b>	
	 Spain, Madrid
<b>1978</b> <b>23 November</b>	
	 Liechtenstein, Vaduz
<b>1988</b> <b>16 November</b>	
	 San Marino, San Marino
<b>1989</b> <b>5 May</b>	
	 Finland, Helsinki
<b>1990</b> <b>6 November</b>	
	 Hungary, Budapest

<b>1991</b> <b>26 November</b>	 Poland, Warsaw
<b>1992</b> <b>7 May</b>	 Bulgaria, Sofia
<b>1993</b> <b>14 May</b>	 Estonia, Tallinn
	 Lithuania, Vilnius
	 Slovenia, Ljubljana
<b>30 June</b>	 Czech Republic, Prague
	 Slovak Republic, Bratislava
<b>7 October</b>	 Romania, Bucharest
<b>1994</b> <b>10 November</b>	 Andorra, Andorra-la-Vella
<b>1995</b> <b>10 February</b>	
	 Latvia, Riga
<b>13 July</b>	 Albania, Tirana
	 Moldova, Chişinău
<b>9 November</b>	 Ukraine, Kiev
	 "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Skopje
<b>1996</b> <b>28 February</b>	 Russian Federation, Moscow
<b>6 November</b>	 Croatia, Zagreb
<b>1999</b> <b>27 April</b>	 Georgia, Tbilisi
<b>2001</b> <b>25 January</b>	 Armenia, Yerevan
	 Azerbaijan, Baku
<b>2002</b> <b>24 April</b>	 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo
<b>2003</b> <b>3 April</b>	 Serbie, Belgrade*
<b>2004</b> <b>5 October</b>	 Monaco, Monaco
<b>2007</b> <b>11 May</b>	 Montenegro, Podgorica

\* This member state acceded originally as Serbia and Montenegro until June 2006.



# Nature and culture – many-sided heritage

Europe's cultural and natural treasures are immense and varied, and every country must do its bit to protect them. The Council of Europe contributes by promoting the continent's many national cultures.

## Europe on-screen

**Eurimages** is the Council of Europe's support fund for films which reflect the many facets of European society. It has 33 contributing states and a budget of some 20 million euros.

## Cultural heritage – it belongs to all of us

Twin conventions on Europe's architectural and archaeological heritage serve as a basis both for consolidating policies to protect them and for making those policies more effective. They also provide a legal framework for international co-operation.

## Open-door heritage

The Council of Europe is behind the "European Heritage Days" scheme. Every September, over the space of a weekend, millions of Europeans are given a chance to visit countless museums, libraries, palaces, castles and monuments free of charge.

## Protecting nature

The **Bern Convention** (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) is designed to:



Biodiversity is the scientists' word for the rich variety of life-forms which surround us. Europe's biological and landscape diversity is increasingly at risk, and the Council of Europe's **Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy** is designed to tackle the dangers.



# Health and social protection

The Council of Europe has taken a whole range of measures to protect health and to promote social cohesion and social rights.

## Health education for young people

The Council of Europe is concerned with young people's health, and encourages pupils, parents and teachers to work together to promote health in schools. The European Network of Health Promoting Schools (ENHPS) now covers close on forty countries and 400 000 schoolchildren.

## A strategy for social cohesion

- to guarantee social protection
- to fight exclusion and discrimination
- to protect marginalised and vulnerable groups
- to promote equal opportunity

## Preventing drug addiction

The **Pompidou Group** has been fighting against drug abuse and trafficking since 1980. It is the main co-ordinating forum for action in Europe to put a stop to both. It has 35 member states and its aims are:

- preventing addiction
- reintegrating addicts into the community
- studying the social impact of addiction



## Security and ethics

The **European Pharmacopoeia** lays down binding standards to ensure optimum quality of medicines and pharmaceutical products in all the member states.

The Council of Europe has published guidelines on safety and standards in the **organ transplant** field. It is also working on xenotransplantation – the transfer of animal organs and tissues to humans.

Health – a factor for social cohesion

# Sport for all

For millions of Europeans, sport means health and entertainment – but it can also teach young people a lot about teamwork, tolerance and fair play. This is the true sporting spirit, and tolerance and respect hold the key to the Council of Europe's work in this area.

The Committee for the Development of Sport (CDDS) prepares conventions and devises programmes to monitor sport, and it also organises conferences of the member states' sports ministers.

## Violence and sport don't mix

The aim of the **European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events** is to keep spectators under control, particularly at football matches.

Specifically, it recommends:

- keeping rival fans apart
- controlling ticket sales
- controlling alcohol consumption
- making organisers accept more responsibility
- stepping up security
- modifying stadiums to protect spectator safety

## No doping!

The **Anti-Doping Convention** lists forbidden drugs and medicines. Specifically, it provides for tighter doping controls and better screening techniques.

The Council of Europe was also involved in setting up an anti-doping agency to monitor compliance with the rules, the aim being to:

- stop doping
- bring in better screening tests
- make the public aware of the dangers of doping
- punish offenders

# Sport without violence



## "Sport for All"

The **European Sport for All Charter** and **Code of Sports Ethics** stress the importance of fair play in sport – of respecting one's opponent, win or lose, and never resorting to violence or cheating.

**Sprint** is a support programme for the setting-up of sports structures, and covers:

- sports law
- loans
- training of managers
- promotion of sports activities

The Council of Europe works on other sport-related projects too including:

- action to promote tolerance and the sporting spirit
- the setting-up of sports facilities
- anti-discrimination measures
- action to publicise the health and other benefits of sport
- sport and economics

**Eurofit**  
Physical education  
health  
A battery of physical  
aptitude assessment  
tests for children and  
adolescents.





# Young Europeans – bringing them together

The Council of Europe wants to make it easier for young people to travel, discover their continent's cultural diversity, meet and join in exploring the ideals and values which make for a democratic society.

## Two European Youth Centres - Strasbourg and Budapest

Throughout the year, these centres run courses for youth association leaders, giving them a chance to meet and discuss the rights of the young, social exclusion, unemployment, international solidarity and countless other topics that young people care about.

Wide-ranging activities:

- training courses, study sessions
- intercultural language courses
- seminars, symposiums, meetings of experts

## Action priorities

- promoting intercultural dialogue and peace
  - human rights education, action to promote human dignity and social cohesion
  - participation by young people and democratic citizenship
- measures to increase young people's geographical mobility

These activities are funded by the **European Youth Foundation (EYF)**, which has an annual budget of some 3 million euros.

## Youth Partnership

Started in 1998, the Youth Partnership sees the Council of Europe working in partnership with the European Commission (EU) in order to provide training for youth workers and youth leaders as well as facilitating research and co-operation.

[www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net)

## Europe by rail

The Council of Europe and the International Union of Railways (UIC) have got together and set up a fund to make travel easier for disadvantaged young people. This covers free travel for youth project participants who could not otherwise afford to join in. The scheme is funded by a one-euro levy on every Inter-Rail card (for under-26s).

## Youth Card

The Youth Card scheme, jointly launched by the Council of Europe and the European Association of Youth Cards (AECJ) offers under-26s concessions on travel and a wide range of goods and services.

respect, solidarity, justice, tolerance



## Youth policies

The European Steering Committee for Youth comprises representatives of the 49 states which have signed the European Cultural Convention. Its aim is to:

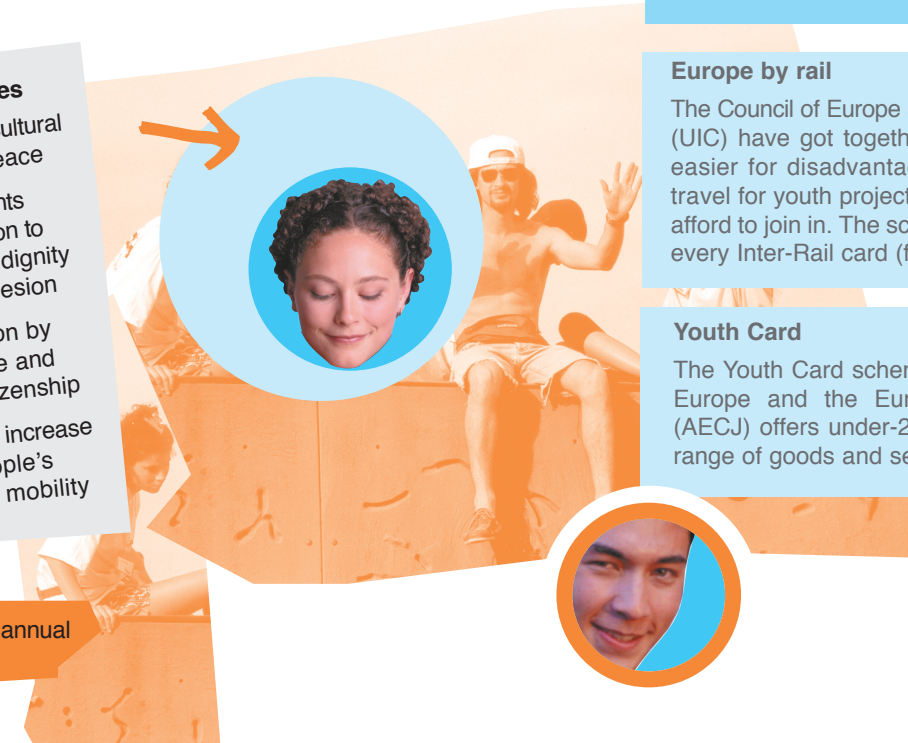
- advise and help young Europeans
- serve as a basis for research in the youth sector
- help young people to find their place in the community

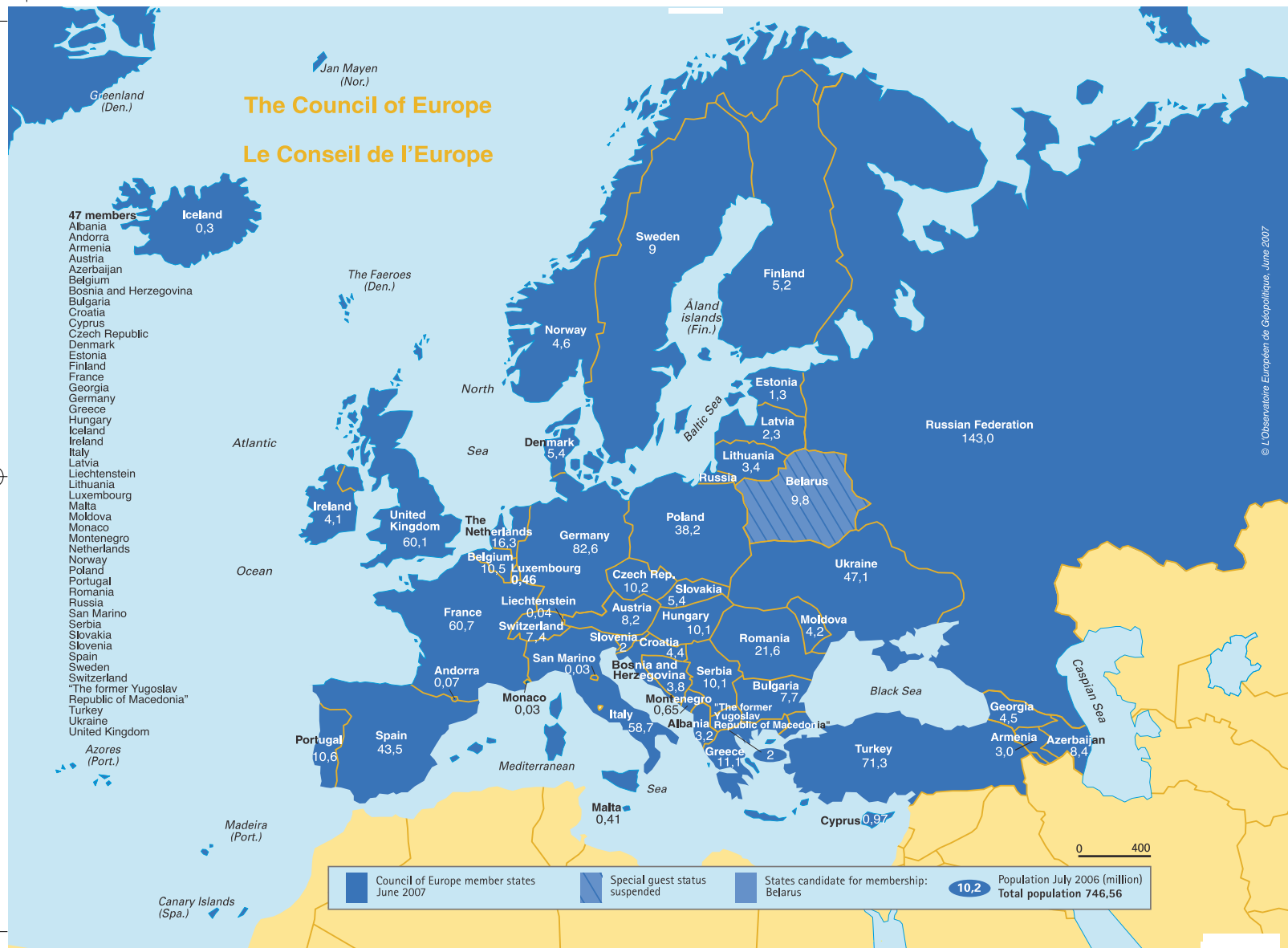
mobility

intercultural dialogue

human rights

participation peace





# Discover more...



Travel the universe of Greater Europe – An adventure story



The Council of Europe – who we are, what we do



Europe is more than you think: Educational fact sheets



Art and architecture of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg



Map and flags of the Council of Europe 47 member states



Playing to learn safety on the Internet – Council of Europe launches game for children

**Text:** Directorate of Communication

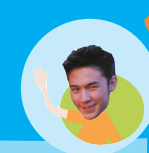
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