

Awareness Lab for Early Response - Team (ALER-T)

June 2011 to April 2013
Main Policy Findings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the summary of the policy proposals made during the last 29 thematic debates organised by the ALER-Team – formed by representatives of all MAEs – since June 2011. On a regular basis, since June 2012, 18 invitations to join the discussions were sent to Ambassadors. Of these, 4 invitations were accepted.

A wide range of topics have been discussed: diversity and migration, the rule of law, internet governance, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, corruption, social cohesion, the consequences of the debt crisis, Islam in Europe, standard-setting, and the relations with the private sector. The main objective has been to anticipate new challenges.

The ALER-T meetings are aimed at suggesting new lines of action and potential strategies which the CoE could adopt in order to better respond to a changing environment on the basis of prospective assumptions made by the Team following a close analysis.

THE PROPOSALS

Beyond the choice of relevant activities to be developed by the Organisation, the question of their **number** in relation to the budget available is a key point. Due to the nature of the thematic periodical meetings, this report does not present a strategy proposal, but rather a list from which to consider new initiatives.

During the discussions, regular references were made to the need for a **practical**, more **specific**, and greater focused approach to the **implementation** of the Organisation's activities. A more **realistic** line of action, better adapted to the problems that Europe faces today, has also been frequently mentioned.

The debates have actively recalled that **more direct involvement** of member states in the **formulation and implementation** of the existing standards may be the most important strategic choice ahead, given the current financial crisis environment.

The need to re-assess the Organisation's **disengagement in fields that appear strategic** in the decades to come – such as migration and ageing – have often been pointed out.

It has also been highlighted that future challenges will require a **transversal and multidisciplinary approach**, inside the Secretariat as well as with external actors.

The need for a better evaluation of policy impacts has been consistently stressed. Likewise, overcoming the routine and inertia in the day-to-day activities seems to be increasingly important. This would also require, it was concluded, further **capacity-building** efforts, the development of refined individual **competencies**, and new working **methods**.

The initiatives presented here – of a varied nature – are interlaced in non-obvious ways. Whilst only the more strategically relevant are presented in the report, a detailed list of proposals is contained in the Appendix.

THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS

EU Future

The crisis in the EU has reinforced the social, political and intercultural “fall-out” that the CoE must increasingly be busy with. It has also proved that the construction of the EU is alone not able to ensure the application of democracy, the rule of law and human rights standards even within its own ranks. The situation in the CoE-47 regarding human rights and democracy standards seems to be – although for different reasons – giving rise to similar concerns.

The crisis has put the relations between the EU and the CoE in a new light. Fewer resources are available for joint activities. Political will has waned – especially, but not only, in the CoE. As the expectations of accession to the EU has slowed down, the pace of reforms has weakened in some member states. Given the increasing difficulties of integration, the CoE could be a **highly valuable partner** to the EU should both organisations carefully co-ordinate their roles. The CoE has important assets: it includes member states which have increasing influence on the international scene and it has formalised the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, which have been – and it may be that they become again – central to stability.

The Euro-crisis and a New European Project

The fragility of the EU during the current crisis is forcing all actors to choose between further political integration and re-nationalisation. Questions on the future of enlargement, on national sovereignty and on the welfare model could be answered by a federal model. However, a new European project will not find its way through – against an increasingly sceptical public opinion – without creating a solid European identity. Yet such a common asset can only be bolstered through credible institutions and solid governance. Visible and measurable improvements to the **fight against corruption** and building an **efficient judiciary** are conditions necessary to obtain the people’s support.

Concentration of Power

Regarding the re-nationalisation of politics, the crisis has inflated the role that politicians give to populist rhetoric. Parliamentary super-majorities and dominant executives have introduced legislation limiting fundamental rights and state checks and balances. Voter’s behaviour has become unpredictable and prone to extremes.

The dilemma we confront is that executive dominance derives from political will. This highlights an issue of “democratic culture” which is much harder to change than it is to change the laws or to provide technical assistance. The CoE CM’s political profile seems to be the cornerstone in order to take relevant political decisions regarding these developments. There is a need for new standard-setting and monitoring instruments concerning the health of democracy in the CoE area.

Direct Democracy

The financial crises, the mismanagement of the banking sector, and a soaring number of cases of corruption have increased people’s distrust of representative democracy. The electorate has thus given their voices to any new proposal. The so-called meta-parties – illustrated by the German Pirate Party and the Italian *5 Stelle* – are trying to reduce **the gap between disenfranchised citizens and political representatives**. These new parties are focusing on direct communication with the people and on the implementation of the proposals put forward by the citizens.

In such a context, the CoE should anticipate new developments by identifying indicators of public opinion evolution and by proposing changes to the interface of the state and the public. The CoE should revive its e-democracy engagement and consider instruments for enhancing the democratic credentials of European institutions (e.g. e-petitions to the CoE).

Undermining Social Cohesion

The crisis has brought social rights and welfare to the fore. It is threatening all people’s living standards, those of the underprivileged as well as those of the middle-class. This situation – with both an unbearable public debt, slow growth and a degraded social vulnerability – should invite the CoE to re-consider its paradigm of social cohesion. A **comprehensive and realistic package of measures** – focused on protecting the rights of the young and the elderly for example – could be proposed. Yet the crisis reminds us that the implementation of any protective policy will have to take into account the availability of resources to be allocated to its implementation.

LIVING TOGETHER

The comprehensive and systematic approach of the report issued by the Group of Eminent Persons calls for the Organisation to occupy a **leadership position regarding diversity** in Europe. The implementation of some of its proposals has already been initiated and activities have been better focused (e.g. the co-operation with the neighbourhood or the initiative on Roma).

However, to be able to take the lead on the broad issue of diversity in Europe some more determination is needed. New strategies and specific tools – based on rights and as well as on obligations – could be proposed in the areas of **asylum policy, humanitarian issues, non-citizen vote, equal access to rights**, and specific **youth** issues. Here too, the political will of the CM will be a condition for the Organisation to have any real leading role in Europe.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Beyond the traditional considerations on this fundamental right, the Organisation faces today two relevant new developments. The first includes various new problems arising from internet governance. The second is linked to the inherent limits between freedom of expression and other freedoms, in particular the freedom of religion.

Internet Governance

It was suggested that the Organisation should give greater priority to the issue of **democracy and social media**. It is crucial to the successful work of the CoE on the freedom of expression that a more clear position of the CoE “family” is adopted on issues such as: the blocking of internet sites by private companies (e.g. WikiLeaks) or by states; intellectual property rights (anti-piracy laws such as ACTA or PIPA); and, more generally, on the need to regulate the internet.

This would also imply actively and smoothly forming **partnerships with private stakeholders** – sometime as powerful as states – and therefore adapting the Organisation’s capabilities and considering new sources of funding.

The Secular and the Religious

Europe’s 20th century secularisation has been influenced by a growing globalisation. It was widely assumed that this evolution would not reverse. Today we are witnessing a growing **polarisation** between religious and secular beliefs. This – as it is well known in Europe – might cause great tensions within society, thus harming social cohesion. Recent examples of such conflicts are visible in the instability of the formation of individual and group identities; and in the still marginal trend of radicalisation against the background of increasing population diversity.

The CoE should give priority to the design of a **multidisciplinary model** to deal and solve emerging conflicts between freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

ISLAM

As a direct consequence of this polarisation, Islam – perhaps the most active and growing religion among the European grassroots – has become an important element of debate. The whole field of developments concerning Islam in Europe challenges the Organisation’s early **warning capabilities and reactivity**.

Salafism

Although it is a minority phenomenon on the continent, Salafism – a puritan branch of Islam ranging from pietism to jihad – increasingly fuels confrontation. Its most radical political turn-off has placed itself publicly **at the verge of human rights** and has introduced a new extreme into the political spectrum.

The fact that Islam is blending into the European identity; the challenge of re-considering old assumptions on the boundaries of freedom of religion and freedom of expression; the need to re-define where the limits of tolerance should be drawn; the increasing emergence of islamophobia and the way it fuels political populism; and the implications of these new developments on social integration policies are facts which will require a **fresh strategy** from the Organisation.

Islamic Law in Europe

Sharia – the Islamic legal system – is a magnet for ideological debate in Europe and, at the same time, is ordinarily used in International Law matters. The priority given by political Islam to the introduction of legislation based on sharia is clashing with human rights standards. This is having repercussions in Europe.

This emerging reality confronts the CoE with a new demanding field of expertise and policy-making in which it could be much more active, for example, by carrying out an early identification of the **conflicts** between human rights standards and sharia.

RULE OF LAW

The concept of the rule of law provides the basis for the development of democracy and underpins the whole human rights protection system. It was suggested that a **strategy on the promotion of rule of law** should be designed. Various documents issued by the Secretary General, DG-HL and the Venice Commission in 2010 provide for such an initiative. Practical examples – such as the privatisation of the military, the pervasive surveillance of citizens (through CCTV, for example), the outsourcing of child protection or the unchecked power of internet providers – are issues justifying a stronger role of the concept of the rule of law.

The Financial Institutions

The concept is especially relevant when applied to financial institutions in the aftermath of the debt crisis. The financial turmoil has revealed that financial corporations have become **over-empowered** in comparison to states. Some are “too-big-to-fall”. Many have seen their profits rocketing. Their opacity is increasingly hitting the headlines.

The CoE should position itself in this environment, perhaps in co-operation with the OECD and other specialised organisations. The CoE's values and principles would make a significant contribution to emerging fields such as **corporate social responsibility, business ethics**, the regulation of **off-shore havens**, and **banking secrecy**. However, this would imply exposing human rights advocacy principles to financial and economic reasoning, which would be new – and perhaps inevitable – for the CoE.

Corruption

Corruption has become one of the main concerns for people in countries which are heavily impacted by austerity measures and unemployment. Thus, the vast majority of member states' populations may be concerned. Recent events have contributed to create momentum to review the **links between corruption and human rights**. One of the reasons is because corruption has a direct link to an individual's distrust of politicians. The CoE has created legal instruments and monitoring mechanisms to fight against this, but in practice the problem remains.

Consequently, the time may have come for the Organisation to re-assess the way its standards are implemented by member states, and to shift the focus away **from a normative aspect** of the problem – mainly a **criminal-law** outlook – to a more **pragmatic** and **multidisciplinary** approach, centred on co-operation activities. Fighting corruption should hence become a transversal theme within the CoE.

SPECIFIC POPULATION GROUPS

Gender and LGTB

The group agreed that **gender equality** is being discussed worldwide and the remaining challenges are well-known. The CoE's position should therefore focus on two main aspects: a new strategy composed of **a small number of practical, specific and realistic objectives** which could be used as benchmarks and an enhanced **co-operation on a concrete implementation** of the existing standards.

The problem with upholding the rights of the **LGBT** lying ahead are abundant, especially in the East. A change towards greater compliance with CoE's standards is taking place in the Western Balkans, although in the Caucasus the drift is in the opposite direction. Action should now be centred in those countries. The Schools of Political Studies, with their privileged access to young national leaders, could play a more active role.

Migration

Member states' **reluctance** to support CoE's activities in this field has greatly restricted its scope to the essential human rights aspects of migration. The ECtHR case-law is currently the sole reference for a CoE strategy. Today no clear policy is in place.

Despite this lack of support to a subject which impacts various fields of human rights, the ALER-Team discussed the promotion and development of specific activities. Limited and concrete action could be developed on the **right to vote** in local elections, on **return** migration policies, and on the **massive migration** taking place in the former Soviet Union space.

The Elderly

The rapid **ageing of Europe's population is a certainty**, as is the fact that the present welfare systems will not be able to cope. It was noted that this is one of those social cohesion fields, together with migration and asylum, where the CoE is decreasingly active and where it has lost its influence.

How will we incorporate having less young people and more elderly people into our human rights perspective? How can we envisage an **increasing dependency** when the role of the state is shrinking – together with the size of families – and where immigration policy is primarily restrictive? How will the welfare state finances cope with whatever choice is made?

It was proposed that the Organisation should at least remain on stand-by in readiness to address the future impact of ageism on the implementation of its principles, values, and activities.

LIMITS OF STANDARD-SETTING

The question of the relevance of the legal instruments and the natural optimum number underpins the debate on the weight of standard-setting, monitoring and assistance in any future strategy.

There are elements limiting standard-setting: the Statute of the CoE; the capacity of consensus on what is of "common interest"; the cost of preparation by the Secretariat and of implementation by a party; and the political will. Nonetheless, there is still significant scope for further specific developments.

It was suggested that increasing attention should be paid to a necessary **collaborative approach**, a renewed focus on **cross-cutting methodology** (and less sector-based), to the proposal of more general instruments, such as **framework conventions** and to the developments of **new protocols**.

SANCTIONS AGAINST NON-COMPLIANT COUNTRIES

The debate on the CoE's credibility and political firmness on member states' compliance to human rights standards continues to be visible in the media.

The ALER-Team discussed additional sanctions which could be applied in case of non-compliance such as: publication of country rankings, annulment of PACE credentials, public boycotting, and personalised sanctions. Beyond considering the **relevance of new sanctions**, there was a general agreement on the necessity to develop a more **assertive interface** with non-compliant members, and a **better co-ordination** – with the EU and internally – if the Organisation's credibility is to be maintained.

NGOs AND THE CoE

The institutional setting for co-operation with the civil society – replicating the PACE and Congress structures – appears ill-adapted and far too formal to cope with the dynamism and the vivacity of civil society. The **whole approach to NGOs** – not only the institutional setting – **needs to be revised**.

It is necessary to promote a real involvement of civil society in the Organisation's institutional mechanisms, by allowing their full and systematic presence in intergovernmental committees or through regular consultations. NGO-CoE joint structures aimed at facilitating co-operation could be set up in the member states.

EXTREMISM

In 2011, the ALER-Team highlighted the need to **review and update the definition of, and strategy towards, extremism**, moving beyond a simple institutional perspective. Taking into account the radicalisation of mainstream politics, the rising of extreme religious activism and the relation between extremism and terrorism it is imperative to keep activities up-to-date.

Today, we are witnessing new expressions of **anti-Semitism. Ultra-nationalism and xenophobia** persist in **sport**. In both cases, the CoE does not compile data from the 47 member states (only the EU-27 has systematic data). Therefore, **data-collection, guidelines** on how to react to disruptive events and a better **co-ordination** – again, internally as well as with the EU and the OSCE – should be envisaged.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Although environmental issues are only considered at present by decisions of the ECtHR, environmental challenges – and in particular those related to climate change – will become an increasing **source of concern for human rights**.

This perspective is certainly a sufficient reason to propose specific activities. The first would be to draft a general **inventory of the possible impact of environmental issues on human rights**– based *inter alia* on ECtHR case-law. The second would be to organise an informal transversal discussion aimed at defining the **role the CoE could play** regarding environment and human rights.

APPENDIX

Detailed List of Proposals

11th ALER-T meeting, 14 June 2011 – **Report of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP)** on *‘Living together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe’*:

- Draw an **action plan** for the implementation of the recommendations of the Group of Eminent Persons Report (GEPR)
- Prepare a **code of good practice** on the basis of the GEPR
- **Take the lead** on managing diversity in Europe
- Undertake contacts at a high level to promote the GEPR and organise a **ministerial conference** on Diversity in Europe
- Organise a communication **campaign** on “Living Together”
- Increase the **co-operation** with European stakeholders on “Living Together” (via the Stockholm process, for example)
- Create an “**anti-prize**” for the most unacceptable statement in Europe regarding “Living Together”

12th ALER-T meeting, 4 July 2011 - *Challenges to the **concept of the rule of law***:

- Design a **strategy** on Rule of Law on the basis of the report on Rule of Law adopted by the Venice Commission at its 86th plenary sessions (Venice, 25-26 March 2011)
- Draft a **matrix** on the Rule of Law including the checklist of the Venice Commission report on the subject and the *acquis* of the CoE on this issue
- Organise a **conference/seminar** on the viability of the concept of Rule of Law

13th ALER-T meeting, 12 September 2011 - *The democratic implications of government attempts to **limit or restrict social media** as a response to civil unrest*:

- Make the concept of “Democracy and the Cyberspace” a **priority** for the CoE
- Undertake a **stock-taking analysis** of the CoE’s texts linked to the governance of the internet
- Promote new Committee of Ministers (CM) and Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) **standards** on internet governance (for example regarding spontaneous gatherings)
- Include in the **Forum for Democracy** a theme on “Societal Developments in New Media and the Information Society”

14th ALER-T meeting, 26 September 2011 - *Fighting the crisis without **undermining social cohesion**: can Europe meet the challenge?*:

- Make the implementation of the recommendations of the GEPR a priority for the CoE
- Prepare a comprehensive and realistic **strategy** in order to foster youth empowerment and strengthen its access to social rights
- **Take the lead** on fighting the crisis through social cohesion
- **Re-assess** the current CoE’s approach to social cohesion
- Make the promotion of the rights of the elderly a **priority** for the CoE

15th ALER-T meeting, 17 October 2011 - **Corruption and Human Rights**

- Enlarge GRECO's focus beyond its normative (criminal-law) dimension to include a **practical dimension** for the **implementation** of fight against corruption
- **Propose** to the Commissioner for Human Rights to devote an issue of his *Viewpoint* to the fight against corruption and its implications for human rights
- Organise a multidisciplinary **conference/seminar** on the interdependence of fighting corruption and human rights
- Enhance CoE's credibility by improving the **implementation** of GRECO's reports and develop the perception of corruption in the member states
- Re-focus **co-operation** with member states on fighting corruption on very practical grounds in order to enhance the implementation of the GRECO recommendations
- **Propose** a set of rules applicable to the members of the PACE to eradicate corruption and promote transparency, for example regarding of lobbying activities.
- **Re-assess** the strategy on fighting corruption in terms of **transversal** co-ordination within the CoE

16th ALER-T meeting, 7 November 2011 - *The Rule of Law and Financial Institutions*

- **Take the lead** on business ethics in relation with human rights and rule of law
- Prepare a **code of ethics** for financial institutions
- Prepare **guidelines** on regulation of globalisation
- Organise a **new activity-line** on corporate social responsibility
- Design social cohesion **indicators**¹
- Enhance **co-operation** with the OECD and the EBRD on the links between human rights and the world of finance and the economy
- Explore the options of **co-operating** with the finance and banking sectors on the integration of human rights in their practice
- Organise a **conference/seminar** on human rights and the financial sector

17th ALER-T meeting, 21 November 2011 - Informal exchange of views on what may be the **challenges and risks in 2012** and their relevance to the future mandate of the Council of Europe

- (no written synopsis)

18th ALER-T meeting, 5 December 2011 - *The Crisis of the Euro, the future of the European Union and the implications for the Council of Europe*

- Enhance the **co-operation** with the EU with new ideas and co-operation proposals
- Publish an **op-ed signed by the SG** presenting the CoE's vision on how to uphold European values during a period of crisis
- **Support** the Schools of Political Studies (SPS) in order to modestly promote a democratic culture among politicians in some member states
- Seize every **opportunity** while dealing with the contemporary assaults to democracy by populist politicians to reinforce CoE's role as democracy watchdog²

¹ Taking into account the over-abundance of such indicators, this proposal does not seem to have a great added-value.

² This is already a priority underlying the activities of the Secretary General. It has therefore been included in group C.

- The PACE should initiate a **monitoring procedure** to investigate last legislative changes in Hungary
- **Invite the CM** to support the SG's position on the current political threats to democracy in Europe³
- Include in the **Forum for Democracy** a theme on the current threats to democracy in Europe and a SG's speech on the protection of democracy from super-majorities

19th ALER-T meeting, 16 January 2012 - **Concentration of power** (*executive dominance, parliamentary super-majorities*)

20th ALER-T meeting, 6 February 2012 – **Anti-piracy laws** (*ACTA, PIPA*) and the freedom of expression

- Organise a **transversal meeting** to agree an institutional position on anti-piracy regulation and freedom of expression
- Organise a **conference/seminar** on freedom of expression and the regulation of the internet

21st ALER-T meeting, 20 February 2012 - *The Use and Abuse of **History** in Times of Crisis: the Perils of Europe being Haunted by Diverging Interpretations of History*

- **Include** history teaching in the follow-up activities to the GEPR

22nd ALER-T meeting, 5 March 2012 - *How can we usefully include the concept of '**the commons**' in the democracy and human rights paradigm promoted by the Council of Europe?*

23rd ALER-T meeting, 19 March 2012 - *Promoting Better **Gender Balance** in Political and Corporate Decision-making Bodies*

- Enhance **co-operation** with member states on the implementation of existing recommendations on gender balance
- Draft **action plans** on specific equality targets that can be used as future benchmarks for progress
- Create a **prize** for excellence in gender equality in Europe
- Organise a **conference/seminar** on gender equality (with the EU) to boost CoE's role

24th ALER-T meeting, 16 April 2012 - *The **Elderly** and Ageism*

25th ALER-T meeting, 21 May 2012 - *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (**LGBT**) Community*

- **Support** the Schools of Political Studies in order to promote LGBT rights in the member states where they are present

26th ALER-T meeting, 4 June 2012 - *The rise of "**meta-parties**" in Europe and the concept of liquid democracy*

- Undertake an **comparative analysis** of the emerging norms of the so-called "liquid democracy" against the European democratic tradition
- **Take the lead** on meta-parties and liquid democracy
- **Re-invigorate** the e-democracy initiative

³ This again seems to be a too obvious proposal. It is included in group C.

- Include a debate on “liquid democracy” and its impact on the CoE’s standards in the **Forum for Democracy**

27th ALER-T meeting, 18 June 2012 – **Migration**

- Undertake an **analysis** of the non-EU migrant voting rights in Europe⁴
- Undertake an **analysis** of the massive migration flows in the former Soviet Union space
- Organise a multidisciplinary **conference/seminar** on migration in Europe necessitate

28th ALER-T meeting, 10 September 2012 – *From the **Euro-crisis** to a new European Project?*

- Organise a **new activity-line** for the study and promotion of an European Identity
- **Enhance credibility** and political weight of the CoE by confronting more often the member states on follow-up and monitoring
- Enhance the practical aspects of **co-operation** on good governance (fighting corruption and access to the judiciary)⁵

29th ALER-T meeting, 24 September 2012 – *The impact of **environmental issues** on Human Rights*

- Organise a **conference/seminar** on human rights and the environment

30th ALER-T meeting, 4 October 2012 – **Salafism** and human rights

- Include Islam in any future **activity** on European identity
- Prepare **guidelines** on the links and boundaries of freedom of religion and freedom of expression
- Organise **capacity-building** activities and create an institutional focus point on Islam (on many emerging topics such as the co-operation with Muslim countries; Islam in Europe, Muslim minorities and extremism)

31st ALER-T meeting, 22 October 2012 – *New **anti-Semitism** in Europe - context and possible responses*

- **Invite the SG** to take up anti-Semitism with the EU and the representatives of the members states where the great number of incidents is recorded
- Foster **co-operation** on data-collection – especially from non-EU countries – on anti-Semitism and xenophobia
- **Promote** the holding of a “Thematic Debate” on anti-Semitism and discrimination against Roma in the CM
- Prepare policy **guidelines** on appropriate reaction to anti-Semitic incidents

32nd ALER-T meeting, 12 November 2012 – **Sport, nationalism and xenophobia**

- Promote a **transversal strategy** – between International Organisations and among CoE’s administrative entities – on xenophobia and ultra-nationalist incidents in sport
- Design new methods and tools for the effective **implementation** of our standards on human rights in the sport

⁴ Any initiative on migration might require prior lobby among the Minister’s Deputies.

⁵ This is a pillar of the majority of the co-operation activities of the Organisation in the member states. It is therefore included in group C.

33rd ALER-T meeting, 26 November 2012 – *Changing **population attitudes** upon key human rights aspects*

- Design and assess the opportunity of the CoE adopting a new lobbying **strategy** regarding communication
- **Re-assess** campaigning strategies taking into account the poor impact and scarce resources the CoE can count on.
- Organise **capacity-building** activities for staff to improve communication effectiveness
- **Assess** the relevance of adopting a “Public Diplomacy” communication strategy
- **Re-assess** the relevance of a corporate re-branding of the CoE (e.g. name and symbols)

34th ALER-T meeting, 3 December 2012 – *Limits of **the standard-setting business***

- Develop a more cross-cutting and **transversal** standard-setting **strategy**: a less sectorial line, preferring framework conventions – e.g. on migrant integration or paperless migrant detention.
- Develop new **protocols** to existing conventions in order to renew and revitalise the CoE’s standard-setting pillar

35th ALER-T meeting, 14 January 2013 – *Reforming the co-operation between **NGOs and the CoE***

- **Assess** the relevance of a systematic participation of the civil society in the CoE’s institutional mechanisms
- **Assess** the relevance of organising systematic and open e-consultations of the civil society
- **Re-assess** and streamline the **co-operation** with the civil society (including fewer action lines, pilot projects and a continuous evaluation)⁶
- **Create** few and small flexible structures in the member states to **co-operate** with the civil society

36th ALER-T meeting, 4 February 2013 – *The secular and the religious – the CoE and a ‘**European Cultural War**’?*

- Prepare **guidelines** on religion and believes in European societies under the light of ECtHR case-law

37th ALER-T meeting, 14 February 2013 - ***Islamic Law** in Europe and the Middle East*

- Prepare **guidelines** on the links and boundaries of Sharia and human rights (with reference to the ECtHR case-law)
- Make the fight against Islamophobia a **priority** for the CoE

38th ALER-T meeting, 18 March 2013 - *Internet Governance and **Private Sector Partnerships**: Lessons Learnt*

- Organise **capacity-building** activities and put in place new working methods to enlarge the co-operation with private sector stakeholders (i.e. private companies)
- **Facilitate** the secondment of staff from private companies
- Undertake an **analysis** of the funding and **co-operation** opportunities with the private sector

⁶ The co-operation with civil society through the Conference of INGOs, in the current environment of scarce resources, seems to have high-jacked any more flexible and reactive type of work (note from DPP).

- In order to increase the CoE's credibility, develop a more **assertive interface** with non-compliant member states
- Consider imposing new sanctions as a tool of improving the compliance with the Organisation's standards