

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Highlights 2014



Guardian of human rights,
democracy and
the rule of law

Activity report

External relations

External Relations website: www.coe.int/DER

POLICY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TOWARDS NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

The implementation of the policy towards neighbouring regions continued in 2014 in close co-operation with the European Union. Political dialogue continued with the countries of the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities (NCPs) have been implemented in Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Kazakhstan and concluded with Kyrgyzstan. In addition, Neighbourhood Partnerships – combining co-operation and enhanced political dialogue – have been prepared with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia for 2015-2017. Council of Europe conventions are more widely adhered to by neighbouring countries and targeted co-operation activities also continued to take place with them, notably through the Venice Commission.

RELATIONS WITH THE EU, THE UN AND THE OSCE

EUROPEAN UNION

Co-operation and co-ordination of action between the two organisations further intensified on the basis of the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). High-level political dialogue continued and implementation of the MoU was regularly assessed by the Ministers' Deputies. The Committee of Ministers considered that a true strategic partnership had been established in the areas of political dialogue, legal co-operation and concrete co-operation activities. In April, the Council of Europe and the EU signed a "Statement of Intent" putting in place a new framework for co-operation in the EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Regions for the period 2014-2020. As in previous years, a substantial part of joint activities was carried out through Joint Programmes. The Council of Europe Liaison Office in Brussels and the Delegation of the EU to the Council of Europe further facilitated the reinforcement of the co-operation described above.

UNITED NATIONS

In December, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution on co-operation between the UN and the Council of Europe, which illustrates the increasing partnership between the two organisations in many areas, human rights in particular. The co-operative work between the two organisations also continued to increase thanks to the Council of Europe Liaison Offices in Geneva and Vienna.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

The Council of Europe continued its close co-operation with the OSCE in 2014. The relations focused on a broad spectrum of human dimension activities "in the field", at the intergovernmental and parliamentary level or between institutions and specialised bodies. The Council of Europe Liaison Offices in Vienna and Warsaw facilitated the co-operation.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER COUNTRIES

The Council of Europe maintained regular contact and relations with other organisations active in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, such as the Organization of American States, La Francophonie or International IDEA. Study visits were also organised for human rights bodies of the League of Arab States, ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Active preferential relations with the observer states were complemented by relations with more than 70 non-member states centred on the fields where the Council of Europe's *acquis* presents a global comparative advantage.



Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and **Stefan Füle**, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, signing a new longer-term framework for co-operation