

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## Highlights 2013



Guardian of human rights,  
democracy and  
the rule of law

Activity report



**Navi Pillay**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Council of Europe Secretary General **Thorbjørn Jagland** on the occasion of the signature of the Joint Declaration on the reinforcement of co-operation between the two organisations on 26 September in New York

# External relations

[www.coe.int/DER](http://www.coe.int/DER)

## POLICY TOWARDS NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

— The implementation of the policy towards neighbouring regions continued in 2013 in close co-operation with the EU. 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 and Tunisia and were concluded with Kazakhstan. Relevant negotiations are ongoing with Kyrgyzstan. This policy was reflected by a wider membership to Council of Europe conventions by neighbouring countries and by participation in targeted co-operation activities, notably with the Venice Commission.

## RELATIONS WITH THE EU, THE UN AND THE OSCE

### EUROPEAN UNION

— High-level political dialogue continued and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 2007 was regularly assessed by the Ministers' Deputies. The latter confirmed that the existing MoU remains a sound basis to guide and structure co-operation. Negotiators from the Council of Europe and EU member states have finalised the draft accession agreement of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights, on which the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has now to decide.

— 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.

### UN

— Following an address by the Secretary General to the Human Rights Council in February, a joint declaration on the reinforcement of co-operation between the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was signed in September. Thanks to the Council of Europe Offices in Geneva and Vienna, the co-operation between the two organisations in many areas increased further.

### OSCE

— The Council of Europe and the OSCE continued to work together on a broad spectrum of human dimension activities "in the field", at the intergovernmental and parliamentary level or between the institutions and specialised bodies. Dialogue on ways to further enhance relations, initiated in 2012, continued.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER COUNTRIES

— The Council of Europe maintained regular relations and contacts with other organisations active in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Community of Democracies and the International Organisation of La Francophonie. Active preferential relations with observer states were complemented by relations with more than 70 states centred on the fields where the Council of Europe's acquis presents a global comparative advantage.