

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## Highlights 2015



Guardian of human rights,  
democracy and  
the rule of law

Activity report





**Ban Ki-moon**, Secretary-General  
of the United Nations, and  
**Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary  
General of the Council of Europe



# External relations

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## POLICY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TOWARDS NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

■ The implementation of the policy towards neighbouring regions continued in 2015 in close co-operation with the European Union. On 4 February 2015, the Committee of Ministers approved Neighbourhood Partnership documents for 2015-2017 with the Council of Europe's closest partners, namely Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, giving a new dynamic to this policy. The Neighbourhood Partnerships combine and strengthen the two pillars of the policy – dialogue and co-operation. In Central Asia, co-operation has further developed with Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic through Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities. Regional Activities also continued. Council of Europe conventions are now more widely adhered to by neighbouring countries.

## RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE UN AND THE OSCE

### European Union

■ Co-operation and co-ordination of actions 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 strategic partnership with the European Union was further strengthened through its three pillars – political dialogue, legal co-operation and co-operation projects. As in previous years, a substantial part of joint activities was carried out through Joint Programmes in Council of Europe member states and in the neighbouring regions. Implementation of the new Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF) for co-operation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership in 2015-2017 started in January. The Council of Europe Liaison Office in Brussels and the Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe further facilitated the reinforcement of the co-operation described above.

### United Nations

■ The UN Secretary-General visited the Organisation in June. The Council of Europe contributed to the discussions leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The co-operation focused on human rights within the Universal Periodic Review, the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the fight against terrorism, both at intergovernmental and parliamentary level. Co-operation between the two organisations also continued to increase thanks to the Council of Europe Liaison Offices in Geneva and Vienna.

### OSCE

■ Relations with the OSCE focused on a broad spectrum of human dimension activities "in the field", at intergovernmental and parliamentary level or between institutions and specialised bodies. In April 2015, the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) exchanged letters aimed at enhancing mutual co-operation. The Council of Europe Liaison Offices in Vienna and Warsaw facilitated the co-operation.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS/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 La Francophonie, the League of Arab States, the Order of Malta and International IDEA. Active preferential relations with the observer states (Holy See, Canada, Japan, Mexico and the USA) were complemented by relations with more than 70 non-member states and focused on the fields where the Council of Europe's *acquis* presents a global comparative advantage.