

Geronimo Stilton

WELCOME TO THE
**COUNCIL OF
EUROPE!**



PALAIS DE L'EUROPE

PIEMME



Presidency of Italy
Council of Europe
November 2021 – May 2022

Présidence de l'Italie
Conseil de l'Europe
Novembre 2021 – Mai 2022

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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PIEMME

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* The information on the Council of Europe presented in this book was up-to-date as of April 1, 2022.

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A MYSTERIOUS, MYSTERIOUS E-MAIL

Sooo, where do I *begin*?

Bless my whiskers! At the beginning, of course! The afternoon I received ...

that mysterious e-mail ...

that very mysterious e-mail ...

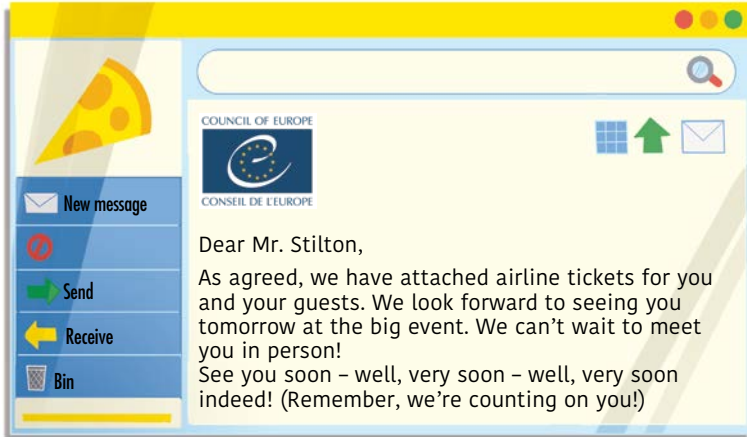
that extremely mysterious e-mail!

I was happily working in my office at the *Rodent's Gazette* in New Mouse City on Mouse Island, when an e-mail flashed up on my computer screen from ... the **COUNCIL OF EUROPE?!**

I started reading, my whiskers twitching with curiosity. Who knows why the Council of



Europe was *writing* to me! To me of all rodents! A rodent from Mouse Island!



Squeak! I was *extremely* puzzled. Airline tickets? Big event? I had nothing like that marked in my calendar!

Then, my sister, Thea, came in. “So, *little brother*, have you packed your suitcase?”

“Excuse me, dear little sister, but I can’t make head or tail of any of this! What do you know that *I DON’T*?”

“Come on,” she squeaked, “don’t you remember that we have to take part in the big event at the Council of Europe today? You got the plane tickets, right?”

“Ha!” I cried. “I knew you had something to do with this! Are you telling me that we have to go to *Brussels*?”

She looked at me with a puzzled expression. “Brussels? Why Brussels?”

“What do you mean ‘Why Brussels?’? That’s where the headquarters of the European Union is! You were the one who said that we have to get on a plane to go to this big event held by ...”

Thea burst out laughing. “Held by the **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**. Not the European Union! You’re confused. They’re two **DIFFERENT*** organisations.



The Council of Europe was set up in 1949. It fights for *freedom of expression*, freedom of the media, freedom of assembly, equality, the protection of minorities, and **human rights** in Europe!”

“Now I understand!” I exclaimed. “But ... well ... no one sent me an invitation.”

“What?! Don't you remember?!”

Ahem ...




Thea shrieked. “I left the envelope with the **invitation** on your desk where you’d see it!”

I stared back at her. “What? Are you sure?”

“I’m **Sure**,” she insisted. “I put it with the box of gorgonzola chocolates that it came with.”

“Umm ... chocolates?” I mumbled. “Umm ... gorgonzola chocolates?” Now I was

suspicious: I knew someone who absolutely loved gorgonzola chocolates ... I picked up a

 **magnifying glass** and examined my desk. There were chocolate pawprints all over it! And they led to the handle on the bottom drawer ...

I flung the drawer open, and inside was ... a box of gorgonzola chocolates ...

An **EMPTY** box of gorgonzola chocolates!



Just then, the office door swung open and my cousin Trap came in. “Hey there!” he yelled. “How you doing, Cousin?”

“**I am doing very badly**, indeed!” I squeaked. “I just found out that someone helped themselves to a box of chocolates that was meant for me! Do you know **anything** about it?”

He scratched his whiskers with a (fake) puzzled expression and then chuckled, “Do you mean that box of chocolates from ... from **STRASBOURG**? From the Council of Europe?”

Thea threw her paws in the air. “See, Geronimo? Even Trap knows that the Council of Europe is in Strasbourg, France!”

My cousin gave me a sly wink. “Just as well I’m here to set you straight on these things!”



Are you grateful, at least?” He then pulled a crumpled envelope out from his pocket.

I stretched out a paw to **fake** it. “This invitation was meant to be for me, too, in case you’ve forgotten!”

Trap chuckled. “Come on, Cousin, don’t get your whiskers in a twist! It’s for me and for you ... I mean, we’re all one family, aren’t we? The Stilton family!”



Finally, I opened the envelope. By that stage, I really was very curious. Inside there was indeed an invitation to an **event** held by the Council of Europe!

When I'd finished reading it, Trap and Thea shrieked in unison, "So, are you ready yet? We've got to leave right now! You're so **lucky** that we've organised everything for you! Are you grateful, at least?"

"Well, to be perfectly honest ..." I mumbled, "I didn't know anything about this invitation until now and I'm not sure I can leave right away ...

**Anyway, what have
I got to do
with Europe?"**





COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mr. Geronimo Stilton
Editor of the Rodent's Gazette and GSG*
17 Swiss Cheese Centre
New Mouse City - Mouse Island

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Dear Mr. Stilton,

We are pleased to invite you to the important international conference *For a Future Together*. This will be a chance to discuss issues of tremendous importance to our Organisation, such as human rights and European identity, and to exchange views on the future of Europe and its role in the world.

Because the more that values are shared, the stronger they grow, there will be speakers and journalists from all over the world.

We look forward to seeing you!

PS: You won't be able to get in without the invitation.

PPS: All the details are on the back.

PPPS: Please contact us immediately, Mr. Stilton. We have a proposal for you!



COUNCIL OF EUROPE ... WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

It was too late to do anything about it all now ... **Squeak!**

Thea and Trap were already dragging me out of my office. “Say what?! What have you got to do with Europe?! You’ve got lots to do with it! We all do! The Council of Europe fights for universal values and **F-U-N-D-a-M-e-N-T-a-L** issues! This conference is about protecting human rights ... **VALUES** that are bigger than cultures and what country you come from ... Because the more that values are shared, the stronger they grow!”

My work friends appeared at every door to



every office at the *Rodent's Gazette*. And they were all telling me that I had to **GO**.

My secretary, Mousella, pushed a backpack with my computer inside into my paw.

“Mr. Stilton, you absolutely have to go to this conference! It’s too **IMPORTANT** to miss!”

Even my friend Creepella was there and exclaimed, “There’ll be journalists and experts from all over the world! You don’t want to **MISS OUT**, do you?!”

Then Grandpa Shortpaws appeared in the corridor, growling, “Hurry up! Hurry up! Don’t be late as usual. Don’t miss the plane! This is an important event!”

My **dear** little nephew, Benjamin, came out from Grandpa Shortpaws’ office, where he’d been doing his homework. Even he was insisting I go! “Uncle, you can’t miss this!”

COUNCIL OF EUROPE ... WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

My dear little niece, Trappy, appeared behind him. “Remember to call us and **tell** us how it goes!”

Mouldy mozzarella! My family and friends were right! The issues that are so important to the **COUNCIL OF EUROPE** are just as important to me! And they're issues that should be important to all of us because they're true all



COUNCIL OF EUROPE ... WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

over the world, and we all need to work hard to **protect** them! So, I sighed, “OK, let’s go.”

But then a thought popped into my head. “What about Spaghetto*? Who’ll take care of him?”

From around a corner came a rodent I knew very well ... My friend *Rebella Strong!*

“Don’t worry, my little cupcake,”

* Spaghetto is Geronimo’s dog and his best friend.



I've got it!



she squeaked. “I’ve already thought of everything! Am I or am I not the mouse who always solves your **problems**? I’ve brought you your suitcase and I’ll take care of Spaghetti!” And Spaghetti, my dear little dog, was with her.

“BOW WOW! BOW WOW!”

Even he seemed to be telling me, “Go, Geronimo! This is too important to miss!”

But there was still something worrying me. **“BUT ... BUT ...** I haven’t studied for this! I don’t want to make a bad impression!”

Thea reassured me, “When we’re on the plane, we can study together.”

Finally, Trap said, “If it weren’t for us ... Are you **grateful**, at least, Geronimo?”

A little later, we were at the airport, where the plane was waiting for us on the runway to take us on the long **FLIGHT** to Europe ... to France ... to Strasbourg!

Council of Europe ... We're on our way!





The Council of Europe has 46 Member States,
27 of which are also members of the European Union.

To find out more, **take a look at the special pamphlet at the end of this book.**



ARE YOU READY, GERONIMO?

“Finally we’re on the plane!” I sighed. “We made it! It was all such a big rush to get here that I’m really **tired** now. I think I might just ... rest a little.”

“What are you saying?!” snapped Thea, showing me her tablet, which was set to airplane mode. “I’ve downloaded all the most important **information** about the Council of Europe. Now it’s time to study it!”

Squeak! I really was exhausted, but my sister was right: I’d already **CONFUSED** the Council of Europe with the European Union, so I really needed to do my best not to make a fool of

* ARE YOU CURIOUS TOO?
You'll find everything you
need to know about the
Council of Europe in the
special pamphlet at the
end of this book. Let's
read it together!

myself again! "Hey, sis,"

I exclaimed, "what a great job
you've done! Where did you find
all this excellent information*?"

She smiled at me. "On the Council
of Europe **website**, of course! It's full of
really interesting facts. You can even take
a virtual tour of the **Palais de l'Europe**,
the Council of Europe's beautiful headquarters
in Strasbourg, as well as all of its other
buildings! It was very impressive, and the
more I read, the more excited I got!"

It was a long flight, but I hardly noticed
because I spent most of the time **studying**
– and the rest of the time sleeping, so I'd be
fresh for the start of the conference.

Finally, feeling quite proud of myself,
I looked at my sister and cousin, and said,

“I’m ready!”

Trap, though, eyed me **SUSPICIOUSLY**,
“Let me be the judge of that ...”
he said, sounding like some grumpy old schoolteacher. And, while nibbling on a Cheddar chunk, he put a very **long** test down under my snout.

“I’ve written a test for you, Cousin. Let’s see how you do!”

Cheese niblets, my cousin was taking this all very **SERIOUSLY!**

So, I concentrated hard on each question and, feeling quite confident, answered every one!



Trap **checked** and double-checked all my answers, and finally admitted, “You’ve done fairly well, Gerrykins. Who’d have guessed! You seem to know something about the Council of Europe!”

Thea, though, gave me a hug. “You-did very well! All your answers were **CORRECT!** You really are ready!”



WELCOME TO THE PALAIS DE L'EUROPE!

I breathed a **SIGH** of relief. I was finally ready to take part in the big event! I'd studied everything I needed to, just like every good journalist always does. Now I'd understand what the speakers were talking about and ask the best, most **INTERESTING** questions. After all, they were going to be talking about some very important things! Afterwards, I could then write an article for the *Rodent's Gazette* so the rodents of Mouse Island could learn all about the **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**, too.

Once out of the airport, we got into a taxi that took us straight to the Palais de l'Europe,

the Council of Europe's headquarters and principal building. It first opened on 28 January 1977 and was designed by a French architect called *Henry Bernard*. I already felt like I knew it, after taking the virtual tour on the website!

When we crossed the wide avenue and saw all the **FLAGS** of the member countries fluttering together side by side in the wind, I felt very emotional. "Europe is a wonderful thing!"

Even Trap squeaked, "I never thought that one day I'd be a guest of an organisation that fights for **unity, justice** and ..."

But I interrupted his speech and exclaimed, "The **invitation!** Who's got the invitation?!"

Trap exclaimed back, "If it wasn't for us ..." and he slapped his paw on his breast pocket.



Wow!

Fabumouse!

“The invitation is here, safe and sound in my pocket!”

“Take it out just to be sure,” said Thea.

“I’d like to check what time we can go in.”

My cousin put his paw in his pocket and searched ... and searched ... and searched!

He then went **pale ...**

Ahem ...

and paler ...

and paler still!

Thea quickly worked out what was going on and snorted, “What have you done now?!”

My cousin turned bright **red** with embarrassment and confessed, “Umm ... Well ... Ahem ... Hem ... I mean ... That is ...



Squeak! It looks like I've **lost** the invitation!"

"So, how are we going to get in?!" I cried.

As usual, Trap tried to **BLAME** me. "It's all your fault, Cousin! You distracted me on the flight because I had to test you!"

Thea, though, tried to reassure me. "It won't be a **problem**. There's no way they won't let us in ... Look, other rodents are already queuing up. Let's join the queue."

Squeak! How could she stay so calm? I clearly remembered that it said on the invitation that you couldn't get in without it!

But then a voice exclaimed, "*Thea, is that really you?*"



ALBANIA



ANDORRA



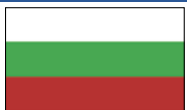
ARMENIA

THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUES

It was Mousy Mousette, a friend of my sister's who's also a **journalist**.

After they'd given each other a hug, I exclaimed, "Hello, Mousy, it's been ages since I saw you last! Are you here to **follow** along too?"

She smiled. "Well, I'm actually here to present my research into *women's rights* and *violence against women*. It was a huge job I did with the Council of Europe. It's important that people know about these issues, and I've got lots of ideas to share!"



BULGARIA



CROATIA



CYPRUS



CZECH REPUBLIC



AUSTRIA



AZERBAIJAN



BELGIUM



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

I looked at her with **ADMIRATION**.

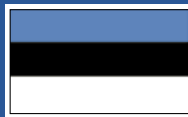
“Congratulations, I can’t wait to hear what you have to say.”

She thanked me and then waved a paw to another rodent, who scurried over. “I’d like to introduce you to one of the judges from the *European Court of Human Rights*.”

After the introductions, we started chatting, and he told us about his work. “The European Court of Human Rights was set up to make sure that countries follow the European Convention on Human Rights, which is one of the most important treaties drawn up by the Council of Europe. We listen to anyone whose fundamental rights have been violated. We **look** at what happened and, if the country’s



DENMARK



ESTONIA



FINLAND



FRANCE



GEORGIA



GERMANY



GREECE



HUNGARY

government didn't do the right thing, we do everything needed to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Thea, Trap, and I were listening closely when another rodent joined us. She **smiled** and said, "Sorry to interrupt, but I heard my friend here telling you about the European Convention on Human Rights, so I wanted to introduce myself, too. I work for the European Committee of **SOCIAL RIGHTS**. We make sure that everyone's social rights – the rights to housing, health, education, and jobs (including the ban on child labour) – are respected by all the countries that have signed the European Social Charter, which is another very important agreement that works with the



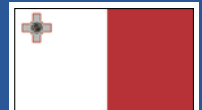
LIECHTENSTEIN



LITHUANIA



LUXEMBOURG



MALTA



ICELAND



IRELAND



ITALY



LATVIA

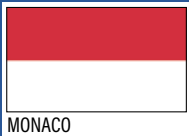
European Convention on Human Rights.”

I was filled to the whiskers with admiration.

“Oh **my goodmouse**, are you speaking at the conference, too?”

She nodded proudly. “Of course! I’ll be talking about our work over the last few months as well as *female empowerment*, which is all about giving women more independence and involvement in economic and political life.”

Little by little, a large group of rodents formed around us. They all wanted to **tell** us why they were there. A lot of them were members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, while others were **EXPERTS**, there to talk about



MONACO



MONTENEGRO



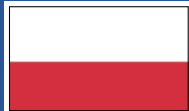
NETHERLANDS



NORTH MACEDONIA



NORWAY



POLAND



PORTUGAL



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

the hundreds of different things that the **COUNCIL OF EUROPE** does.

An archaeologist and expert in cultural heritage told us about programmes to acknowledge, appreciate and protect Europe's cultural **heritage** ...

A university researcher and scientist explained some of the technical questions she was studying for a proposal to regulate **artificial intelligence**, a machine's ability to make use of typical human skills like reasoning and learning in order to carry out tasks and analyses ...

Two of the representatives talked about the work of the Council of Europe in **children's rights** and education in the various Member States.



SLOVAK REPUBLIC



SLOVENIA



SPAIN



SWEDEN



ROMANIA



SAN MARINO



SERBIA

Little by little, I got a much clearer idea of just how many **AREAS** in which the Council of Europe works. And there were lots more than I'd ever guessed! I've only *mentioned* a few of them here!

In the **SPECIAL** pamphlet at the end of this book, you can see all the information that can help you find out more about all of the **Council's** activities.

To learn more about the values that the Council of Europe fights for, turn the page. I wrote a post on the Rodent's Gazette's Snoutbook page, and lots of rodents reacted. **Here are some of the most marvelmouse comments!**



SWITZERLAND



TURKEY



UKRAINE



UNITED KINGDOM

SNOUTBOOK

• THE RODENT'S GAZETTE



I'M WRITING FROM STRASBOURG!

I'm in front of the **PALAIS DE L'EUROPE** and am about to take part in a big event organised by the Council of Europe! Do you know what this mousetastic organisation fights for every day?



FOR DEMOCRACY!

Democracy is the type of government in which power is in the hands of the people. And the people are **FREE** and all **SHARE THE SAME RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**. A democracy is the opposite of a dictatorship, where power is in the hands of just one person (or a few people).



FOR JUSTICE!

Everyone without distinction needs to obey the laws and constitution, so we can live in harmony together. And **EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED BY THEIR COUNTRY**.



FOR HUMAN RIGHTS!

There are certain **RIGHTS** that must never be violated because they ensure that people are valued and respected for who they are. We call them human rights and they belong to everyone ... **CHILDREN. TEENAGERS. AND ADULTS. NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE IN THE WORLD!**



Well said, Trap! Young people might think that these ideas are complicated and are only about adults, but that's not true! **OUR LIVES ARE BUILT ON THESE VALUES!** We can all make a difference!

Correct! I also want to fight for everyone's rights ... without distinction! Everyone's as important as everyone else, and we must all have the same opportunities! I never want to hear any rodent say again, **"THIS IS A GIRLS' GAME" OR "THAT'S A BOYS' GAME"!**



WE ALL HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS and we're all equal. But we're also different, because each of us is special and has their own story. But that's pretty mousetastic, isn't it! We can learn a lot from each other, as long as we don't let fear of what we don't understand stop us. **I SAY NO TO DISCRIMINATION AND YES TO INCLUSION!**



I agree and think that everyone has the **RIGHT TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINION**, even if it's different from mine. The most important thing is to always respect other people's ideas and feelings.



I was super impressed that the Council of Europe fights for **EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION**. I've always taken education for granted, but making sure that everyone can go to a good school that they can afford isn't the whole deal! We have to make sure that **ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CAN GO TO SCHOOL** and then continue studying even after they've finished their basic education.



Do we want to talk about all the work to **MAKE SURE PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO HEALTHCARE?** Everyone's physical and mental well-being is the basis of our quality of life, and everyone must have access to healthcare when they're sick! **BECAUSE HEALTH IS EVERYONE'S RIGHT AND ALSO IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTERESTS!**





A REAL HONOUR

I learnt a lot of *interesting* things chitchatting with those rodents from all over Europe ... and the rest of the world!

I turned to Thea. “You were right: we couldn’t miss this event. I thought I’d **studied** enough but now I know how important the work is that the Council of Europe does. It affects so many people’s lives!”

Trap boasted, “You *say* that now! Just as well we made you come!”

We were now almost at the front of the queue. I was still worried about the invitation

and **muttered**, “Who knows if they’ll let us in ...”

Thea snorted, “What are you saying? Of course they’ll let us in!”

How could she be so **SURE**?

As soon as it was our turn, the rodent at the entrance gave me a wave. “Oh, you’re finally here, Mr. Stilton! Don’t worry, you don’t need an invitation.”

How peculiar! I returned the kind greeting and went inside. Immediately, lots more rodents came over to meet me.

“We’ve all been waiting for you, Mr. Stilton!”

“Thank you for coming!”

“Your contribution will be **PRICELESS!**”

How very peculiar! Even though I was puzzled, I smiled and thanked them all.

I’d never been given such a **WARM** welcome!

A REAL HONOUR

The conference was being held in the Chamber of the **PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**.

A real honour! The 324 members that make up the Council of Europe's parliament normally meet here four times a year, and this is where the most **IMPORTANT** guests come. I walked over to one of the armchairs normally

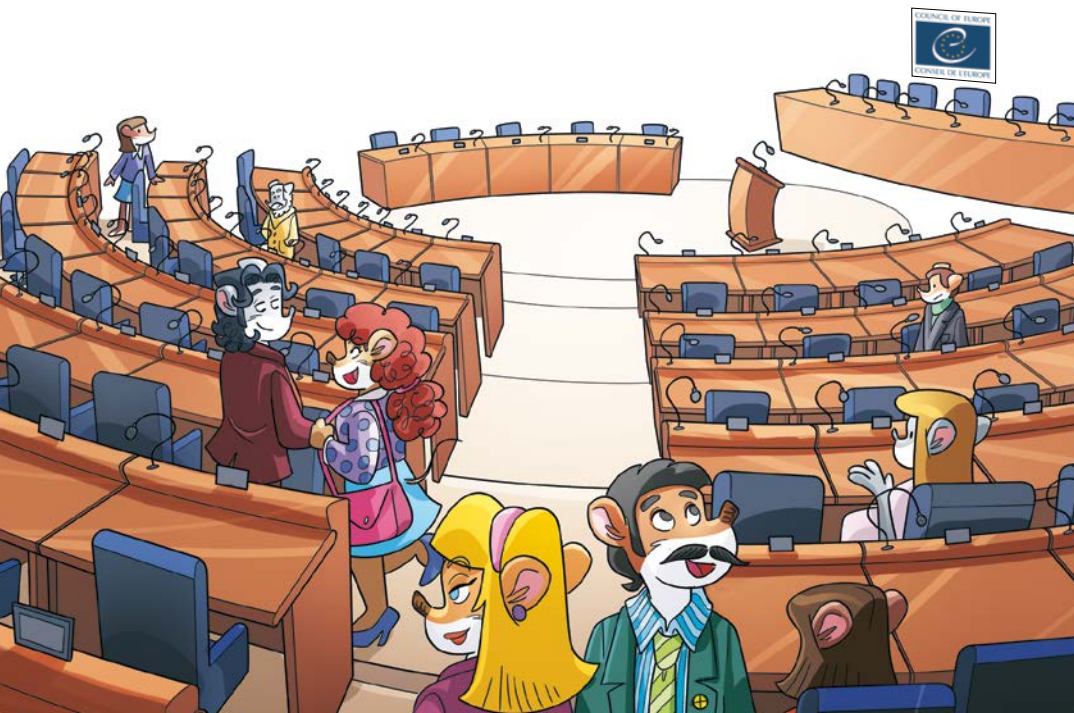


reserved for the members. The audience was sitting there, too!

But Trap and Thea cried, “**WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!** You’re sitting over there!”

I shook myself. “Huh? Where?”

Just then, a very polite rodent came up to me and **POINTED** to the Presidential Table. “Over



there, please, Mr. Stilton. You'll soon be giving the opening **ADDRESS** and then ...”

I was flabbergasted! “Me?! How, when, what, why?!”

Thea explained everything. “What do you mean ‘How, when, what, why?!’?” Geronimo, you're the conference moderator! Why do you think I was so sure they'd let us in?”

I turned as white as a mozzarella.

*“The conference moderator?
Who made me the conference moderator?”*

How come no one told me?!”

Thea calmly replied, “Well, I made all the arrangements. The invitation said that they had a proposal for you, and, knowing you, I knew you'd **forget!**”



I snorted, “Bless my whiskers, you might have warned me!”

But Trap was already pushing me towards the Presidential Table. “You know as well as we do how **upset** you would have been if we’d told you. Now, come along and remember not to make a fool of yourself!”

Thea patted me on the shoulder and gave me an encouraging smile. “Don’t worry, Gerry, you’ll do a **great job!**”

Feeling a little better, I made my way to the stage. I then took the microphone and was silent for a moment.

Everyone was **looking** at me, waiting for the opening address.

Rat-munching rattlesnakes! What was I going to say?!



A JOURNEY TO TAKE TOGETHER

Then I worked it out. I'd speak from the **HEART**, because that way I was sure to reach everyone else's heart, too. So, I cleared my throat and started talking.

“Hello everyone. My name is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton. I'm **honoured** to be here with you today at such a special event, where we'll discuss issues that are very important to **us** all.”



The audience cheered! So, feeling a little calmer, I kept going. “It was a long journey from Mouse Island to **STRASBOURG**, but it was worth it, rodent’s word of honour! We must never let the distances that seem to separate us divide us or scare us, because there’s no distance that can’t be bridged. Seeing everyone here today is proof of that. We’re all here because we’re committed to working **TOGETHER** to find solutions to the problems that face us. I therefore want to thank you as well as the **COUNCIL OF EUROPE**, whose work isn’t always that obvious but it still influences the life of every European because it protects the values that our society is built on: *justice, equality, and human rights.*”

The audience was listening without saying a word, so I continued. “Thanks to the Council

of Europe, more and more people know about the importance of **human rights** and are working together on the long journey of life towards a better, fairer, and more supportive society. And I hope that this can happen outside of **Europe** as well, because these issues have no borders and affect all of us.

That's why I promise you that I will do my best to share good, accurate **INFORMATION** with people about what the Council of Europe does.”

Then I pointed to Thea and Trap in the audience. “And thanks to my family, who reminded me of the importance of always **COMMITTING** yourself to the things that matter!”



So, that's how I started the conference, which continued for the next three days.

When the evening of the last day came around and the last speaker had spoken, I took the microphone again and announced, "It was wonderful to **share** this journey with you. Thank you for making it so special!"

I then stepped down off the stage amid the applause, happy to have done my part. Thea and Trap gave me a big **hug**.

Later, while we were all lining up to take the group photo, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the Council of Europe came over. "Hello, I'm the Italian **Ambassador**," he said. "My job is to be Italy's voice in the Organisation and promote collaboration between my country and the Council of Europe. And I've got a proposal for you,

Mr. Stilton ... An official invitation to come to Rome for another big event: the **ITALIAN PRESIDENCY** of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.”

Thea, Trap, and I all said together, “Rome? Another conference? Absolutely! Count on us, **we’ll be there!**”

I winked at my cousin. “This time, though, we’ll have to be careful not to lose the invitation!”

So, after a good laugh with my family, our **FABUMOUSE JOURNEY** was over. And it really was one of the most important journeys I’d ever had!





Dear mouse friends,

The Council of Europe is a mousetastic organisation that was set up many years ago to give life to a dream ...

The dream of a Europe where everyone in every country can feel free, welcome, and protected, and have the same rights and opportunities. And the Council of Europe is still fighting every day to make this dream a reality for everyone!

In other words, the Council of Europe really deserves all our support. Find out more with me in this special pamphlet that's packed with vital information.

As you know by now, the Council of Europe works in many different areas and organises lots of activities. To discover them all, keep on learning! You won't regret it, rodent's word of honour!

Yours

Geronimo Stilton



DISCOVERING THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The **Council of Europe** is an international organisation. It was set up on 5 May 1949 under the Treaty of London, marking the beginning of the process to rebuild Europe.

It was set up by the **founding fathers**, individuals who started off the process of social construction. They'd lived through two world wars and had first-hand experience of different European cultures. They were the **pioneers of a peaceful Europe**.

GOALS

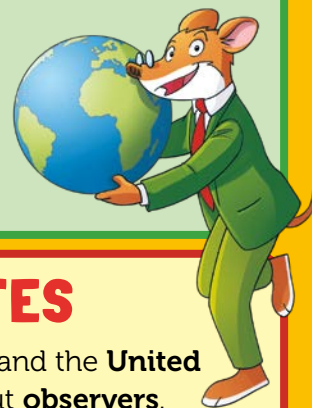
The mission of the Council of Europe is to **protect democracy and human rights in Europe**. The Organisation fights for:

- ★ the **abolition** of the death penalty;
- ★ **strengthening** human rights;
- ★ **non-discrimination** and **getting rid of racism**;
- ★ **freedom of expression**;
- ★ **gender equality**;
- ★ **children's rights**;
- ★ **cultural diversity**;
- ★ **education in human rights and democracy**;
- ★ **free and democratic elections in Member States**;
- ★ **quality medicines and healthcare**.

MEMBER STATES

Forty-six countries are members of the Council of Europe, with 27 of them also members of the European Union. There are **10 founding countries**, while the other **36** joined later*.

Albania	Greece	Romania
Andorra	Hungary	San Marino
Armenia	Iceland	Serbia
Austria	Ireland	Slovak Republic
Azerbaijan	Italy	Slovenia
Belgium	Latvia	Spain
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Liechtenstein	Sweden
Bulgaria	Lithuania	Switzerland
Croatia	Luxembourg	Turkey
Cyprus	Malta	Ukraine
Czech Republic	Monaco	United Kingdom
Denmark	Montenegro	
Estonia	Netherlands	
Finland	North Macedonia	
France	Norway	
Georgia	Poland	
Germany	Portugal	
	Republic of Moldova	



* Information up-to-date as of April 1, 2022.

OBSERVER STATES

Canada, Holy See, Israel, Japan, Mexico, and the United States of America aren't Member States but **observers**. This means they can observe the regular meetings of the Ministers' Deputies or the Parliamentary Assembly, but they have no right to vote.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE Member States no longer apply the death penalty.

ACTIVITIES

The Council of Europe:

- ★ works through **conventions** and **treaties**;
- ★ makes recommendations through **independent expert monitoring bodies**;
- ★ **monitors the progress** of Member States.

ORGANISATION

The Council of Europe's headquarters are in **Strasbourg, France**. It employs 2 200 people. It also has field offices and liaison offices with other international organisations.

The **European Youth Centres** in Strasbourg and Budapest, for example, offer **education to young people in democracy and human rights**.



THE PALAIS DE L'EUROPE

Designed by **French architect Henry Bernard** and **opened in 1977**, the Palais de l'Europe is the headquarters of the Council of Europe. On either side of its entrance are the **flags** of the 46 Member States, arranged side by side in alphabetical order, according to the country names in English.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

French and **English** are the two official languages of the Council of Europe. **German, Italian, and Russian** are working languages.



THE EUROPEAN ANTHEM



The Council of Europe has used the **European anthem** since 1972. The anthem is an excerpt from the prelude to "**Ode to Joy**" from **Beethoven's 9th Symphony**.

THE FLAG

The flag has **12 gold stars on a blue background**. The Council of Europe chose it in 1955. The number 12 symbolises perfection and never changes. The European Community – now the **European Union** – started **using the flag** as well in **1986**.



THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE LOGO

The symbol of the Council of Europe is a **white C** around **12 gold stars on a blue background**. The letter C stands for *Council* and *Conseil* in the two official languages, English and French.



★ HOW IT ALL WORKS ★



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Parliamentary Assembly consists of members of parliament from the **46 Member States**.

These MPs represent the **830 million Europeans** who elected them.

The Assembly elects the **Secretary General**, the **Human Rights Commissioner**, as well as the judges who work in the **European Court of Human Rights**. It's a **democratic forum** for discussion. It also monitors elections. It forms committees that play a key role in examining current issues.

The Assembly meets in the **Chamber of the Palais de l'Europe**. Inside, the MPs aren't divided by country but in alphabetical order according to their surnames. This is because their main job is to look after the interests of Europe and not just their own country's.

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

The Committee of Ministers is the **part of the Council of Europe that makes decisions**. It's made up of the **foreign affairs Ministers from each Member States** or their permanent diplomatic representatives (ambassadors) in Strasbourg.

SECRETARY GENERAL

Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly for five-year terms, the Secretary General **leads and represents the Council of Europe**.

BUT THERE'S MUCH MORE!

The Council of Europe also works through:

- the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**;
- the **European Court of Human Rights**;
- the **Commissioner for Human Rights**;
- the **Conference of INGOs** (non-governmental organisations).

The Council of Europe works in close partnership with the **European Union**. It also co-operates with the **United Nations**, the **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe**, and with partner nations, both nearby and around the world.

TREATIES AND CONVENTIONS

The Council of Europe has **produced over 200 treaties and conventions** in many areas. These include the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Istanbul Convention against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.



THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Council of Europe adopted the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** in 1950. It protects our civil and political rights.

The convention is very important for **protecting human rights**, since it's the only one with a permanent mechanism – the **European Court of Human Rights** in Strasbourg – that people can appeal to so they can be sure their rights are protected.

The European Court of Human Rights has one judge from each country that's agreed to the convention and makes sure that each country follows its rules.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anyone can **appeal to the European Court of Human Rights** (it doesn't matter what their citizenship is or where they live) if they believe that a country that's **agreed to the ECHR** hasn't met its obligations and they have exhausted all national legal options.

★ You can find the full text of the European Convention on Human Rights at:
www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf

★ DON'T GET CONFUSED! ★

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IS NOT ...

... **THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)** - The EU has 27 Member States. They've all delegated some of their sovereignty so that decisions that affect all of Europe can be made at the European level.

... **THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL** - This is part of the EU made up of the heads of State from its member countries, the President of the European Commission, and the President of the European Council. Its job is to plan EU policies.

THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IS NOT ...

... **THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT** - This is the parliament of the EU. It has 705 members from the 27 EU countries, all of them elected by the people.



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DOES?
Like to take a virtual tour of the Palais de l'Europe?
Visit the website: www.coe.int/en/



Come with me on this adventure!

WE'LL FIND OUT ABOUT
A REALLY IMPORTANT ORGANISATION
THAT DEFENDS AND PROTECTS
EVERYONE'S RIGHTS!



Dear rodent friends,

When the Council of Europe invited me to Strasbourg I was ... flabbergasted! And I confess, I didn't know a lot about this fabumouse organisation. But luckily I soon found out just how much our friends at the Council of Europe do to change the world.

And I realised that I also have to do my part to help them to support the values they fight for: democracy, rights, and justice!

So, what are you waiting for?

Next stop, Strasbourg!

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES ...

At the end of the book, you'll find a poster you can pull out and keep with lots of information and fun facts about the Council of Europe!

Geronimo Stilton
PIEMME



Presidency of Italy
Council of Europe
November 2021 - May 2022

Présidence de l'Italie
Conseil de l'Europe
Novembre 2021 - Mai 2022

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE