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| **MINISTERS’ DEPUTIES** | Information documents | **CM/Inf(2022)22** | 4 November 2022 [[1]](#footnote-1) |

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| **Stocktaking of the Irish Presidencyof the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe(20 May – 9 November 2022)** |

**Introduction**

Ireland assumed the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (for the seventh time) in Turin on 20 May 2022. The term began at a critical juncture in the institution’s 73-year history, as the Council sought to respond to the immediate consequences of the war in Ukraine and adjust to the expulsion of Russia, while continuing to address democratic backsliding and challenges to human rights across the continent.

With strong support from the Secretary General, the European Court of Human Rights, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), Secretariat officials, other key Council institutions and civil society and cultural partners, 65 events were held during Ireland’s six-month Presidency. Alongside 44 policy-oriented conferences, seminars and roundtables in Strasbourg, Ireland, and across Europe, the Presidency organised 21 cultural events in Strasbourg, promoting engagement between delegations and with the city of Strasbourg following the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Across its term, the Presidency advanced the work of the Committee of Ministers’ Deputies (CM), in particular by engaging civil society, academia and international partners across priority themes. These included: promoting and protecting LGBTIQ+ rights; deepening the Council’s relationship with the European Union; ensuring safety of journalists and media freedom; promoting the issue of human rights and the environment; engaging with Belarussian democratic forces; and advancing political support for accountability for the Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

The Presidency also worked to improve communications by the CM by issuing joint statements with Secretary General Burić and President Tiny Kox and holding regular press conferences that detailed the Committee’s work to international media.

In taking forward these efforts, the Presidency enjoyed exceptional support from the Council Secretariat, PACE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Court of Human Rights, the Commissioner for Human Rights, and many others. ‘‘Ní neart go cur le chéile,’’ an Irish proverb has it – ‘‘we are stronger together’’. Ireland’s experience as President affirms that the Council of Europe is unquestionably stronger when its key institutions work

closely together.

The overarching goal of Ireland’s Presidency, working with our partners, was to renew what the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, has called ‘the conscience of Europe’. Within this framework, the Presidency has progressed initiatives under three thematic headings:

1. **‘Our Founding Freedoms’ – Reinforcing Human Rights and the Protection of Civilians**
2. **‘Hear Our Voices’ – Promoting Participatory Democracy and Youth Engagement**
3. **‘Fáilte’ – Fostering a Europe of Welcome, Inclusion and Diversity**

This report outlines the initiatives taken during the course of the Irish Presidency in each of these thematic areas.

# ‘Our Founding Freedoms’ - Reinforcing Human Rights and the Protection of Civilians

A thematic focus of Ireland’s 2020-2022 UN Security Council term, reinforcing fundamental human rights and protecting civilians has always been at the core of Ireland’s foreign policy. The issue took on new and heightened urgency this year, however, in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

## Russia’s aggression against Ukraine

Supporting Ukraine, and Ukrainians displaced by the conflict, was a particular focus for the Presidency.

On 30 June, the CM took several decisions regarding the modalities for the participation of the Russian Federation in **open conventions**, inviting each body representing all the parties of treaties to which the Russian Federation is also a party to decide on such modalities as soon as possible and no later than the end of November 2022. The CM further agreed, on 13 July, on the loss of rights of participation of the Russian Federation and Belarus in the intergovernmental work of the Ad hoc European Committee for the World Anti-Doping Agency (CAHAMA).

On 7 and 8 July, the Presidency hosted the Joint Annual Meeting of the **Council of Europe Development Bank** in Dublin. In its capacity as Chair, the Presidency secured an agreement that fast tracked Ukraine’s admittance to the Bank, which will enable the institution to play a significant part in rebuilding the country’s social and judicial infrastructure. At the same meeting, the Presidency established and contributed

€1 million to a new Ukrainian Trust Fund at the Bank, part of a wider series of measures to aid Ukrainians displaced by the conflict.

In September, Ireland chaired a series of meetings on the question of **accountability** for the war of aggression in Ukraine. On 12 September, a Side Event – “Ensuring coherence in accountability for the Russian aggression against Ukraine” – was organised under the auspices of the Presidency and saw interventions from Ukraine’s Deputy Minister of Justice, the President of Ukraine’s Supreme Court, and Ukraine’s Prosecutor General. On 15 September, the CM adopted a decision stressing the urgent need to ensure a comprehensive system of accountability for serious violations of international law arising out of the Russian aggression against Ukraine to avoid impunity and to prevent further violations. The CM also noted with interest the Ukrainian proposals to establish an ad hoc special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and a comprehensive international compensation mechanism, including, as a first step, an international register of damage.

On 30 September, the Chair of the Committee of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney T.D., the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Tiny Kox, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, made a **joint statement** strongly condemning the decision of the Russian Federation to proceed with the illegal annexation of territories it currently occupies in Ukraine.

On 5 October, the Deputies took a set of decisions relating to the modalities of participation of **Belarus** in open conventions, inviting each body to decide on such modalities no later than the end of December 2022. The Deputies also instructed the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) to prepare priorities for
co-operation with Russian and Belarusian civil society, independent media and human rights defenders which could be implemented in 2023.

## Supporting the European Court of Human Rights

The Irish Presidency has emphasised the central role of the European Court of Human Rights and has sought to support the work of the Court at a time of challenge, with a view to ensuring that those within the jurisdiction of the member States continue to enjoy the guarantees and protections provided for under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Court was prioritised during high-level visits to the Council of Europe, with the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Committee of Ministers Chair, Simon Coveney T.D., and Minister of State for European Affairs, Thomas Byrne T.D., each visiting the Court during the Presidency.

On 11 July, Minister Coveney, Secretary General Pejčinović Burić and President Kox made a **joint statement** welcoming the European Court of Human Rights’ judgment in the *Kavala v. Türkiye* case and renewing their call for the immediate release of Mr Kavala. On 13 July, the CM took note of the judgment, urged the authorities to ensure that Mr Kavala is released immediately and invited the Secretariat to carry out a detailed analysis of the Grand Chamber judgment for examination at its next Human Rights meeting in September. On 1 September Minister of State Byrne met with Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister, Faruk Kaymakcı, to raise Mr Kavala’s case and stress the importance the Committee of Ministers attaches to full implementation of Court rulings. At their Human Rights meeting, from 20 to 22 September, the Deputies examined the Kavala judgment delivered under Article 46§4 of the Convention, on the basis of a detailed analysis provided by the Secretariat. The CM called upon all member States, the Secretary General as well as other relevant Council of Europe bodies and Observer States to intensify their high-level contacts with Türkiye. The Committee also encouraged the Chair to consider further action to ensure appropriate oversight of this case. On 22 September Minister Coveney met with his Turkish counterpart, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, to discuss Mr Kavala’s detention. Minister Coveney underlined once again the obligation on all contracting parties to the Convention to abide by judgments handed down by the European Court of Human Rights. In response to the CMDH decision, the Chair took the initiative to establish a Liaison Group in respect of this case on 16 October to ensure appropriate oversight of this case.

On 1 September, the conference ‘Lighting the Shade: Effective Application of the European Convention on Human Rights in **Areas of Conflict** in Europe’ was held at the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the University of Galway, where delegates reflected on how to ensure human rights protections for individuals in areas of protracted conflict or contested sovereignty across the continent.

On 20 October, the President of the European Court of Human Rights, Judge Robert Spano, and its President-elect, Judge Síofra O’Leary, led a **delegation** comprising the Vice-Presidents and Section Presidents of the Court in visiting Dublin for roundtable meetings with judges of the Irish Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Donal O’Donnell. Members of both courts addressed a public conference at Dublin City University titled “Human Rights in a Time of Change’’, at which Ireland’s Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman T.D., launched an Irish language translation of the Convention.

## Protecting Human Rights Defenders

On 24 and 25 October, the Presidency welcomed Commissioner Mijatović to Dublin for a roundtable with 40 of the continent’s leading human rights defenders. UN Special Representative for Human Rights,
Mary Lawlor, contributed to the roundtable and joined the Commissioner in addressing Front Line Defenders’ annual Dublin Platform later that same week.

## Countering Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

On 29-30 September, Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee T.D., chaired a **Ministerial conference** in Dublin on countering domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, entitled *“No Safe Haven”: integrated prevention measures to end domestic, sexual and gender-based violence*. Ministers gathered to reaffirm their support for the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
(the Istanbul Convention) and, by way of a new Dublin Declaration, committed to new efforts to substantively tackle violence against women and girls across the continent. Thirty-eight member States aligned with the Dublin Declaration, which underlines States’ commitment at the highest level to actively promote an institutional and political culture which rejects gender-based discrimination and violence, sexism, gender stereotypes and gendered power dynamics in the public and private sector. This built on support for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence contained within the Turin Ministerial decisions.

On 5 October, the Deputies held an exchange of views with Ms Iris Luarasi, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (**GREVIO**). They also heard a video message from Minister McEntee where she summarised decisions taken at the Dublin Ministerial.

## Rule of law and Judicial Co-operation

On 30 June, Minister of State Byrne opened the annual conference of the **Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals** (HELP) programme, where he praised the programme for meaningfully advancing the protection of human rights across the continent by enhancing the capacity of judges, lawyers and prosecutors to apply European human rights standards in their work as legal professionals.

On 15 September, an exchange of views took place with Mr Antonio Vercher Noguera, President of the **Consultative Council of European Prosecutors** (CCPE), while on 5 October, the Deputies took note of the 2021 activity report of the **European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice** (CEPEJ) and its European judicial systems Evaluation Report (edition 2022).

# ‘Hear Our Voices’ – Promoting Participatory Democracy & Youth Engagement

Alongside the rights violations stemming from the war in Ukraine, democratic backsliding across the continent is one of the foremost challenges facing the Council of Europe today. Building upon the focus on youth in the Turin Ministerial decisions, and working with the Secretariat, PACE and others, the Presidency instituted a range of projects to address democratic decline, promote participatory democracy, and strengthen youth engagement in the democratic process, with a particular focus on the value of civic education at all levels.

## Participatory Democracy

On 23-25 May, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman T.D., hosted a conference on supporting **Children’s Participation in Democracy and Policy** in University College Cork. Minister O’Gorman also hosted an Intergovernmental Conference on **Upholding the Best Interests of Children in Family Law** in Farmleigh, Dublin from 3-5 October, as Ireland works to advance the implementation of the recently launched Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027).

The Presidency also sponsored the **Youth Democracy Action Week** held from 28 June to 1 July in Strasbourg. 450 participants from across Europe took part and issued a 50-point call for action, echoing the 50 years of the Council of Europe youth sector, which centred on the four main themes of the Youth Action week: Revitalising democracy and access to rights; Meaningful youth participation; Digitalisation; and Peacebuilding.

Supporting democratic activists and civil society in States where democracy is under pressure or actively supressed has been a particular focus for the Presidency. On 13 July the CM took note of the annual report of activities for 2021 of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the **Venice Commission**), and endorsed the Revised Code of Good Practice on Referendums adopted by the Commission. On
7 September, the Deputies held an exchange of views with Claire Bazy Malaurie, President of the Venice Commission. On 13 September, in conjunction with the Venice Commission and the OSCE, the Presidency convened a high-level conference in Strasbourg on how to develop stronger European standards on the Freedom of Association, supporting civil society as a cornerstone of liberal democracy.

On 7 November, Minister Coveney addressed the **World Forum for Democracy**, which saw a special focus on Ireland’s experience of Citizens’ Assemblies, with the Secretary General of Ireland’s Electoral Commission, Art O’Leary, amongst several Irish contributors.

## Education for Democracy

On 15-17 June, Dublin City University hosted the **Global Forum on the Democratic Mission of Higher Education**, with almost 200 higher education leaders from 40 states convening to consider what more third level institutions must do to support democratic, sustainable societies. Minister for Higher Education,
Simon Harris T.D., joined Minister of State Byrne and leading Council officials in addressing the Forum.

On 13 July, the CM adopted a recommendation on countering **education fraud**. The recommendation follows four years of work in the framework of the ETINED platform of the Council of Europe on ethics, integrity, and transparency in education, and addresses the need for a common European approach in this field.

Reflecting the importance of a nuanced understanding of history in fostering inclusive democracy, the Presidency partnered with the **Observatory on History Teaching in Europe** on 4 October to gather history teaching experts from across the continent for a seminar entitled ‘‘Centenary of the Irish Civil War: a case study for Europe’’.

Minister for Overseas Development and Diaspora, Colm Brophy T.D., hosted the **European Congress on Global Education** in Dublin Castle on 3-4 November where States agreed a new European Declaration on Global Education, committing to investment in Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship and Human Rights, amongst other areas.

## Freedom of Expression

Building upon the Turin Ministerial decisions in relation to ‘Freedom of expression, the right to information and combatting discrimination and hate speech’, the Presidency convened an informal exchange of views, on 28 September, on the **safety of journalists and media freedom in Europe**. Discussions focused on three themes – the safety of journalists and media freedom in Europe, Russia’s war on Ukraine and press freedom and online threats to journalism – and saw interventions from speakers including the General Secretary of European Federation of Journalists, the Director of Justice for Journalists Foundation, the Director of the Information Society and Action against Crime Directorate, and a leading academic in this area, Professor Tarlach McGonagle of Leiden University.

On 30 June, the Deputies instructed the Committee on **Artificial Intelligence** to proceed speedily with the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on artificial intelligence based on the Council of Europe’s standards and open to participation by non-member States, while taking into account other relevant existing international legal frameworks or those under development.

## Local Democracy

With the support of the Association of Irish Local Government, the Presidency delivered a series of events underlining the importance of **local political engagement** to effective democracy.

Alongside a meeting of the **Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities** in Kerry in June, the Association of Irish Local Government devoted its annual conference in Meath in mid-September to the work of the Council of Europe.

Minister of State for Local Government, Peter Burke, and Dublin Lord Mayor, Caroline Conroy, both addressed **Congress** on 25 October.

## Structured engagement with Belarusian democratic opposition forces

On 6 July, the Presidency organised an exchange of views with **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**, leader of the Belarusian democratic opposition forces, where Ms Tsikhanouskaya called for the establishment of structured engagement to institutionalise Belarus democratic forces and civil society relations with the Council of Europe.

On 7 September, the CM agreed to hold regular exchanges with Ms Tsikhanouskaya and other representatives of Belarusian democratic opposition forces, following the fruitful exchange of views on
6 July. The Committee invited the Secretary General to set up a “**Contact group**” within the Council of Europe, in co-operation with representatives of Belarusian democratic forces and civil society. The group will regularly report back to the Committee on its activities.

 **‘Fáilte’ – Fostering a Europe of Inclusion and Diversity**

Protecting the fundamental freedoms of minorities and vulnerable groups across the continent, a core function of the Council of Europe, has assumed an even greater importance in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the refugee challenges it precipitated.

## Movement of People

The Deputies held an exchange of views with Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, **Leyla Kayacik,** on 13 July on the reports of her fact-finding visits to the Slovak Republic
(2-4 May 2022) and Czech Republic (4-6 May 2022), and on 27 September on the reports of her fact-finding visits to Poland (30 May – 3 June 2022) and the Republic of Moldova (13‑14 June 2022).

The Deputies held an exchange of views, also on 13 July, with Helga Gayer, President of the **Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** (GRETA).

On 27 September, the CM adopted a set of guidelines aimed at assisting member States in their efforts to comply with their obligations to secure to everyone, within their jurisdiction, the rights and freedoms defined in the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as a Recommendation on preventing and combating **trafficking** in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation.

## Protecting LGBTIQ+ Rights

Protecting LGBTI+ Rights and raising awareness of the growing challenges facing the **LGBTIQ+ community** across Europe was a key Presidency priority.

On 9 June, as part of Pride Month, the Presidency hosted a screening of ***The Queen of Ireland***, with Director Conor Horgan, and led discussions on the issue with officials from the City of Strasbourg and the diplomatic community.

On 15 June, the Committee of Ministers held its first ever **thematic exchange** on non-discrimination of LGBTIQ+ persons with the participation of speakers from the International LGBTQI+ Youth & Student Organisation (IGYLO) and the NGO Insight.

On 6 July, the Deputies took note of the first thematic implementation review report on the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation on measures to **combat discrimination** on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, focusing on the specific legal gender recognition aspect of the Recommendation.

The Chair of the Committee of Ministers, Simon Coveney, made a statement on 1 September, encouraging the Serbian authorities to support and facilitate a peaceful and secure **EuroPride**. Ambassador Breifne O’Reilly later addressed the Belgrade EuroPride event online.

On 27 October, Ireland hosted a GT-ADI-SOGI **European Roundtable** **on 'Right to life, security and protection from violence: combating LGBTI hate crime across Europe’**, bringing together activists and policymakers from across the continent. Opening the meeting, Minister O’Gorman announced new domestic legislation to tackle hate crime and hate speech, with gender, including gender expression and identity, amongst a list of protected characteristics also including race, colour, nationality, religion and sexual orientation.

## Combatting Hate

On 7 June, the Presidency hosted an ‘Expert seminar on the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation on **preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism** and discrimination’, featuring the participation of ECRI, the OSCE and the Organisation of Islamic
Co-operation. Later that month the Deputies held an exchange of views with Maria Daniella Marouda, Chair of **ECRI**.

An informal meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies was held on 18 October on Strategies to promote tolerance and combat hate, with a particular focus on **antisemitism**. This followed the adoption by the CM of a Recommendation on remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity.

## Human Rights and the Environment

Drawing upon the inclusion of this issue in the Turin Ministerial decisions, Ireland’s Presidency hosted an **informal CM meeting** on 6 October on the subject of **human rights and the environment**. It brought together a range of Council experts and officials, alongside civil society actors, to discuss the imminent feasibility study on an additional Protocol to the ECHR on the right to a healthy environment. This followed the adoption by the CM, on 27 September, of a Recommendation on human rights and the protection of the environment.

## Roma and Travellers

The Presidency took part in ceremonies in Strasbourg to mark the 78th anniversary of **the European Roma Holocaust** on 2 August.

Ireland hosted a meeting of the Council’s Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (**ADI-ROM**) in Galway on 14-15 September and arranged for national experts and senior Council officials to contribute to subsequent conference on ‘Irish Travellers/Mincéirs & the State, 1922-2022’, hosted by the University of Galway on 16-17 September.

## National Minorities

The Deputies held an exchange of views on 27 September with Mikko Puumalainen, Acting President of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the **Protection of** **National Minorities**, and took note of the 13th activity report of the Advisory Committee.

**Emerging issues**

While advancing work across these three priority themes, the Presidency also took action on a number of issues that emerged over the course of our six-month term.

## A fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government

The Turin Ministerial decisions “invited its Deputies to consider the desirability of a 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe”. The CM Chair, Simon Coveney, strongly supported this initiative and was determined to progress the organisation of a 4th Summit during his term.

During Minister Coveney’s address to PACE on 21 June, and Minister of State Byrne’s address to the CM on 30 June, both ministers called for the Council of Europe to urgently convene a 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government asking “if not now, when?”.

On 11 July, the Presidency welcomed Secretary General Pejčinović Burić’s appointment of a new
High-Level Reflection Group to advise on the future role of the Council of Europe. Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, was appointed Chair of the Group, which also included Evangelos Venizelos (rapporteur), Josep Dallerès Codina, Federica Mogherini, Iveta Radičová, Bernard Cazeneuve and Ine Søreide. On 5 October the Presidency published the Group’s report, which presented thirty key recommendations across five thematic areas. A blueprint for institutional renewal, the Group’s report called for enhanced political engagement with the Council, a redoubling of investment in the institution’s core competences – the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – and enhanced pan-European co-operation, above all with the EU and UN.

On 13 July, the Presidency proposed the formation of an Ad Hoc Working Party on a 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which was formally established on 7 September under its Icelandic Chair. On 7 November, the CM took the historic decision to hold a 4th Summit during Iceland’s Presidency.

## Enhanced co-operation with the EU and the UN

The Presidency was committed to developing the relationships between the Council of Europe and key international partners, above all the EU and the UN.

On 6 July, the Presidency organised an exchange of views with Mr Michael O’Flaherty, Director of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), focusing on human rights violations in Europe and complementarities between the FRA and the Council of Europe.

The Deputies held an exchange of views with EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore, on 7 September, where Mr Gilmore described the Council of Europe as the European Union’s “natural first partner” as “both come from same vision, spirit and ambition to ensure peace”.

On 18 October, the Presidency invited UN High Representative, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, to address the Informal meeting on "Strategies to promote tolerance and combat hate", where he called on technology companies to define new business models that address on-line hate speech without infringing on fundamental human rights.

On 19 October, the CM saw an exchange of views with EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, where Mr Várhelyi outlined interdependencies in the EU’s candidate states and Eastern Partnership countries.

Deputies also adopted on 19 October a biannual co-operation draft resolution with the UN, which displays and develops co-operation in areas including the protection of human rights, the fight against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, the protection of minorities, the prevention of torture, the fight against trafficking in human beings and violence against women and the protection and promotion of the rights of children. Following agreement, the draft resolution was transmitted to Ireland’s Permanent Representation to the UN in New York, which will take the necessary next steps in co-ordination with the Icelandic Presidency.

## Application to join the Council of Europe by Kosovo[[2]](#footnote-2)\*.

On 12 May 2022, a week before Ireland assumed the Presidency, Kosovo\* submitted an application for membership of the Council of Europe. Ireland was determined during our term to address this application in an appropriate and balanced manner, which respected the varied views of member States. From the outset, the Presidency communicated the steps it intended to take to inform the discussion before further action was taken.

Ireland committed to an ‘open door’ policy for any stakeholder who wished to discuss the issue during its term. The Presidency also consulted regularly with partners leading the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and the Berlin Process, before agreeing on next steps to be taken at the CM.

In July, the Presidency requested a legal opinion from the Council of Europe Legal Advisor on questions related to the membership process. This opinion was completed and shared with member States on
5 September.

On 14 September, the Deputies held an exchange of views with Miroslav Lajčák, EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues. Mr Lajčák spoke about challenges in the region and said that the war in Ukraine demonstrates that “we need peace, stability and reconciliation in Europe now more than ever”.

On 27 September, the Chair informed the Deputies of two recent discussions at the Bureau on the outstanding membership application. A number of member States responded to this update, which was helpful in informing the Chair of their views.

On 19 October, an exchange of views took place with Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, where she discussed her memorandum on Human Rights in Kosovo\*. Commissioner Mijatović gave an overview of her mission from 30 May to 3 June, which forms part of her regular monitoring work, and highlighted the need for implementation of European Court judgments.

## Communications and outreach

Communication of the work of the Committee of Ministers is an increasingly important issue, as the Organisation aims to keep pace in a fast-changing international environment, where credibility and public support are often linked to an organisation’s profile and public awareness. The issues of transparency, engagement and communication were regularly raised by member States during Ireland’s Presidency term.

As a first step in addressing this, the Presidency initiated the holding of regular press conferences with international journalists. These engagements were held online and were hosted by the Chair, in a
non-attributed capacity, with support from the Council’s Communications team. The Chair updated on recent developments and answered questions from journalists on the work of the CM, while divulging only publicly available information.

The Presidency initiated Joint Statements on a range of subjects, most notably on developments related to the war in Ukraine.

In conjunction with the Council’s Communications team, the Presidency also organised for a Council of Europe stand to be established in the Global Ireland tent at the Ploughing Championships in Co Laois, Ireland, from 20-22 September. The Ploughing Championships is one of the largest annual events in Europe, with an estimated 18,000 people visiting the Council of Europe stand across the three days.

##  Connecting through Culture

As noted, the Presidency hosted 21 cultural events in Strasbourg during its six-month term.

The first full Presidency since France in 2019 not to be significantly affected by the Covid-19 virus, Ireland used cultural programming to reconnect communities across the Council. With Ireland’s cultural heritage integral to our diplomatic identity, the Presidency was determined to bring *craic* back to Strasbourg during our term.

High level visits to the summer and autumn PACE Sessions were marked by programmes celebrating the diversity of modern Irish culture. ‘New Éire, a concert of new Irish musicians at the Pavillon Joséphine in June, was followed by a virtuoso performance by pianist Mícéal O’Rourke at the Aubette on Place Kléber in October.

The Presidency also featured Gaelic Games and traditional dance at workshops and *Céilís*, hosted film screenings on LGBTIQ+ rights, mental health and the Alsatian-Irish artist Tomi Ungerer, presented exhibitions on James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and the Bern Convention, and showcased Irish literature and drama though book readings, performances and Strasbourg’s first poetry jukebox. In particular, the Presidency would like to thank the 58 teams and over 250 people who took part in the Presidency Walking Challenge, walking over 72 million steps during September and October to encourage healthy living.

**Policy Programme**

**19-20 May, Turin** Beginning of Ireland’s Presidency with handover from Italy’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Mr. Luigi Di Maio, to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D.

**23-25 May, University College Cork, Cork** Conference on Building a Europe for and with Children, hosted by Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Mr Roderic O’Gorman T.D.

**26-27 May, Galmont Hotel, Galway** Circom Regional Conference 2022 and award of the ‘Prix Circom’, hosted by Circom Regional and TG4

**30-31 May, Westin Hotel, Dublin**Bureau and Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

**6 June, European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg** Visit of An Taoiseach to the European Court of Human Rights

**7 June, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Expert seminar on ECRI’s General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination

**14 June, Tralee, Kerry** Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

**15 June,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg**  Committee of Ministers (CM) Exchange of Views with LGBTI Speakers for Pride Month

**15-17 June, Dublin City University, Dublin** Global Forum on Higher Education Leadership for Democracy, Sustainability, and Social Justice, with the participation of Minister for Further and Higher Education,
Mr Simon Harris T.D. and Minister of State for European Affairs, Mr Thomas Byrne T.D.

**21-24 June, Department of Health, Dublin** Executive Training on ‘Substance use, addictions and online practices’, co-hosted by the Department of Health and the Pompidou Group

**20-24 June, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and address by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D.

**28 June-1 July, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Youth Action Week: Democracy Here, Democracy Now

**30 June, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Network Annual Conference and address by Minister of State for European Affairs, Mr Thomas Byrne T.D.

**30 June, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Visit of the Executive Committee of the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) to the Council of Europe

**7-9 July, Dublin Castle, Dublin** Annual Joint Meeting of the Governing Board and the Administrative Council of the Council of Europe Development Bank hosted by Minister for Finance, Mr Paschal Donohoe T.D., and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Simon Coveney T.D.

**2 August, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** European Roma Holocaust Memorial Event

**13 August, Pavillon Joséphine, Strasbourg** Launch of European Heritage Days

**1 September, National University of Ireland, Galway** Conference on **‘‘**Lighting the Shade: Effective application of ECHR in Areas of Conflict in Europe’’ with the participation of Minister of State for European Affairs, Mr Thomas Byrne T.D.

**7 September,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** CM Exchanges of Views with Director of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, Mr Michael O’Flaherty, and Belarussian Democratic Opposition Leader, Ms Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

**7 September,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** CM Exchange of Views with EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Eamon Gilmore

**12 September,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Side Event “Ensuring coherence in accountability for the Russian aggression against Ukraine: the ad hoc Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and the Compensation Commission for Ukraine”

**13 September, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Venice Commission conference on New Challenges to the Freedom of Association, with the participation of Minister for European Affairs, Mr Thomas Byrne T.D.

**14-15 September, Meath** Annual Conference of the Association of Irish Local Government

**15 September,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** CM Exchange of Views with EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, Mr Miroslav Lajčák

**15 September, National University of Ireland, Galway** Meeting of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM)

**16-17 September, National University of Ireland, Galway** Irish Travellers / Mincéirs and the State 1922 – 2022: the Struggle for Equality conference

**22-24 September, Ratheniska, Laois** Presidency of the Council of Europe stand at the National Ploughing Championships

**28 September,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** CM informal Exchange of Views on “Media Freedom and Safety of Journalists”

**29-30 September, RDS, Dublin** Conference of the Ministers of Justice on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence hosted by Minister for Justice, Ms Helen McEntee T.D.

**3-5 October, Farmleigh House, Dublin** Intergovernmental conference on The Voice and Determination of the Best Interests of Children in Family Law Proceedings hosted by Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Mr. Roderic O’Gorman T.D.

**4 October, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg “**Centenary of the Irish Civil War: a case study for Europe”

**6 October,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Informal CM meeting on “Environment and Human Rights in the Council of Europe”

**10-14 October, Strasbourg** Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and addresses by President of Ireland, H.E. Mr Michael D. Higgins, and Minister of State for European Affairs,
Mr Thomas Byrne T.D.

**10-28 October, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg***Conserving our Heartland,* anexhibition celebrating 40 Years of the Bern Convention in Ireland

**18 October,** **Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Informal CM meeting on "Strategies to promote tolerance and combat hate"

**20-21 October, Iveagh House and DCU, Dublin** Judicial conference between the President and Bureau of the European Court of Human Rights and Senior Irish Judiciary, led by the Chief Justice of Ireland

**24-25 October, Iveagh House, Dublin** European Human Rights Defenders Roundtable hosted by Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Dunja Mijatović

**25-27 October, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities with an address from Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr Peter Burke T.D.

**27 October, Iveagh House, Dublin** GT-ADI-SOGI European Roundtable on 'Right to life, security and protection from violence: combating LGBTI hate crime across Europe’

**28 October, Iveagh House, Dublin** Meeting of the Council of Europe’s working group on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (GT-ADI-SOGI)

**2-5 November, Belgrade, Serbia** First Annual Forum on History Education, reception co-hosted by the Presidency of Ireland and the Council of Europe office in Belgrade

**3 November, Dublin** ‘The Council of Europe at a Crossroads’ webinar hosted by the Institute of International and European Affairs

**3-4 November, Dublin** European Congress on Global Citizenship Education hosted by Minister for Overseas Development and Diaspora, Mr Colm Brophy T.D.

**7-9 November, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** World Forum for Democracy and Presidency handover from Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Simon Coveney T.D., to Iceland’s Prime Minister, Ms [Katrín Jakobsdóttir](https://www.google.ie/search?sxsrf=ALiCzsY9GmwzB_Jblhyu6xE-GLTxXknB7A:1664268456595&q=Katr%C3%ADn+Jakobsd%C3%B3ttir&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3ME0zrSpOfsRoyi3w8sc9YSmdSWtOXmNU4-IKzsgvd80rySypFJLgYoOy-KR4uJC08SxiFfVOLCk6vDZPwSsxOz-pOOXw5pKSzCIACZ6qcF4AAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiS76mRy7T6AhUTT8AKHYbAAJoQzIcDKAB6BAgNEAE)

**Cultural Calendar**

**1 June, Place de la République, Strasbourg** Opening Ceremony at Strasbourg City Hall

**4 June, Stade de l’Ill, Strasbourg** GAA and Irish Dancing Workshop

**9 June, Cinéma Star Saint-Exupéry, Strasbourg** Pride month: screening of *The Queen of Ireland* with Director Conor Horgan, preceded by a rooftop reception

**14 June, Permanent Mission of the EU to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg** Auction and Charity Event, “Stand with Ukraine”

**15 June, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** *Jurisprudence of Joyce* with Dr Joseph Hassett and *Reverberations: Music and Musings from Joyce’s Dublin* with Tale of the Gael

**21 June, Pavillon Joséphine, Strasbourg** ‘*New Éire’*, a celebration of young Irish musicians

**28 June-28 August, Bibliothèque André Malraux, Strasbourg** Exhibition on *Following Ulysses* by Deirdre Brennan

**1\_10 July, 5e Lieu, Strasbourg** Irish Poetry Jukebox installation

**6 September, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Screening of *Fascinating Fascism*

**7 September, Musée Tomi Ungerer, Strasbourg** Celebration of Alsatian artist and satirist Tomi Ungerer with Aria Ungerer

**9 September, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** *Rentrée*: a showcase of traditional Irish music

**12 September – 7 October, Strasbourg** Irish Presidency Walking Challenge

**7 October, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** World Mental Health Week: Screening of *Horrible Creature* by Director Aine Stapleton, a film based on the life of James Joyce’s daughter, Lucia Joyce

**11 October, Aubette, Place Kléber, Strasbourg** *Sounds of Europe,* a concert featuring the works of Galuppi, Field, Beethoven, Debussy and Chopin with Mícéal O’Rourke

**20 October,**  [**Association Parlementaire européenne, Strasbourg**](https://www.alliance-francaise.ie/) *Lire Notre Europe* with author Jan Carson

**25 October, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Congress of Local and Regional Authorities culture evening

**27-30 October, Théâtre du Cube Noir, Strasbourg** Performances of *She Was Wearing*, a series of nine especially commissioned monologues which highlight the issue of violence against women

**3 November, Eglise Saint-Pierre-le Vieux, Strasbourg** End of Presidency*Samhain* céilíevent

**7 November, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Performance of *Les 3 Barbus...ou Presque!* at the World Forum for Democracy

**8 November, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Screening of *John Hume in America* in the presence of the

director Maurice Fitzpatrick

**8 November, Palais de l’Europe, Strasbourg** Cultural evening with the incoming Icelandic Presidency at the World Forum for Democracy

**List of replies to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendations adopted from June to October 2022**

* “Socio-economic inequalities in Europe: time to restore social trust by strengthening social rights” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2210 (2021)

* “Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe” - Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2211 (2021)
* “More participatory democracy to tackle climate change” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2212 (2021)

* “Best interests of the child and policies to ensure a work-life balance” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2216 (2021)

* “The right to be heard – child participation: a foundation for democratic societies” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2218 (2022)

* “Inaction on climate change – A violation of children's rights” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2219 (2022)

* “Football governance: business and values” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2221 (2022)

* “Beating Covid-19 with public health measures” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2222 (2022)

* “The Observatory on History Teaching in Europe” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2224 (2022)

* “Consequences of the Russian Federation’s continued aggression against Ukraine: role and response of the Council of Europe” –

Recommendation 2228 (2022) of the Parliamentary Assembly

* “Safeguarding and promoting genuine democracy in Europe” –

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2232 (2022)

1. This document has been classified restricted until examination by the Committee of Ministers [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \* *All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)