

Press Release

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The Council of Europe and Norway create a trust fund to support the implementation of the Convention on Human Rights

Oslo, 14.03.2008 – Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Jonas Gahr Støre, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, today signed an agreement for the creation of a Human Rights Fund Trust, which will support – in cooperation with the Council of Europe Development Bank - projects in Europe to ensure the application of the Convention on Human Rights. The first projects will be funded in 2008.

Norway will initially make a one million euros contribution to the fund - which is open for other states to participate-. The projects will aim to ensure the application of the convention in national human rights legislation, the training of legal professionals, the dissemination of European Court of Human Rights case-law and the execution of judgments of the Court at national level.

Terry Davis declared: "The implementation of the convention on human rights requires a solid and effective legal system at national level. If this is not in place, the rights the convention protects cannot be guaranteed. This agreement is an expression of Norway's commitment to the promotion of human rights in Europe and sets the pace for other countries to join this effort to consolidate the rights established by the convention".

"A main priority for Norway in the Council of Europe is to contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of the European Court of Human Rights. I hope the Trust Fund will become an important new financing mechanism for national measures to implement the European Convention of Human Rights", said Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and called on other member states to contribute to the Fund and on the Council of Europe to submit good project proposals.

Some European states face obstacles or may lack the required expertise to implement the convention. The purpose of the fund is to support national efforts through specific projects to achieve the following objectives:

- that effective national remedies exist for anyone who wishes to file a complaint due to a violation of the Convention
- that procedures at national level comply with the legal procedures under the Convention to conduct effective investigation in the case of serious violations of human rights
- that effective mechanisms exist for verifying the compatibility of draft legislation and administrative practice with the Convention
- the adequate training in convention standards of law professionals
- the dissemination of the Court's case-law
- full and timely domestic execution of judgments of the Court
- adequate organisation and management of administrative and judicial public services

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.

The agreement was signed during Terry Davis' official visit to Norway. This morning he held meetings at the Storting (Norwegian Parliament) and had an audience with His Majesty King Harald V. He also gave a lecture on the state of human rights in Europe at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). In the afternoon he will meet the State Secretary of Justice, Ms Astri Aas-Hansen, and the Minister of Research and Higher Education, Ms Tora Aasland.

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