

Press Release

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Council of Europe to fight discrimination, foster integration in Europe-wide events next month

Strasbourg, 30.10.2008 - With recent polls indicating rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in Europe and beyond – from racist chants in football stadiums to desecrated cemeteries – the Council of Europe will take part in a broad array of events in November to fight intolerance and promote integration and justice.

November includes two international days on the theme of discrimination: the International Day against Fascism and anti-Semitism on 9 November and the International Day of Tolerance on 16 November, and the Council of Europe will initiate or take part in the following events to address the past and look to current challenges in Europe:

- An international conference November 4-8 in Baku, "Various forms of Islamophobia and Xenophobia: their impact on youth and the youth role in preventing them". Its main theme is "beyond religious differences".
- The Council of Europe's 4th Seminar of European Ministers of Education in Nuremberg and in Dachau on 5-7 November: "Teaching remembrance for a Europe of freedom and the rule of law."
- "Lessons Learned? Holocaust remembrance and combating anti-Semitism": a meeting organised by the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research with the OSCE and ODIHR in Vienna, Austria on 10 November. It corresponds with the 70th anniversary of "Reichskristallnacht" and Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis will attend.
- The "Lisbon Forum" on 10-11 November, organised by the Council of Europe's North-South Centre, to address the "universality of human rights and its implementation at international and regional levels." Participants will include Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and President of the European Court of Human Rights Jean-Paul Costa.
- "Human Rights in culturally diverse societies: challenges and perspectives," a conference on 12-13 November in the Hague.

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Lluís Maria de Puig, will participate in a conference organised in Paris by EFI (European Friends of Israel) on 6 November and contribute to the debate on promoting Europe-Israel dialogue and partnership. On 10 November in Brussels, President de Puig will also participate, in the framework of the UN Day of Tolerance and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, in the commemoration of the "Reichskristallnacht".

Throughout 2009, the Council of Europe will also take action through its new campaign "Speak out against Discrimination," to be carried out in co-operation with the media.

For more details and other information on these and other events, please contact the Council of Europe press service.

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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.