

Press Release

Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 795a06

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

pressunit@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



46 members

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

People will always migrate from despair to hope **Statement by Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the occasion of the International Day of Migration**

Strasbourg, 18.12.2006 – "People migrate. They always have done, and they always will. Whatever their motives, people will continue to move - from persecution to freedom, from starvation to survival, from poverty to dignity and from despair to hope.

Governments must therefore put policies in place to deal with migratory flows in ways which are economically sustainable, politically sound, effective in the long-term - and which respect human dignity and human rights.

Across Europe, people of many different origins, cultures and religions live side by side - not always in harmony, not always without tensions - but they are here to stay. A multicultural Europe is fact of life, not some far-fetched intellectual concept. The question is therefore not whether we accept or agree with cultural diversity, but rather how we respond to it.

A growing number of politicians have decided to cater to populist fears and prejudices. They seek political profit from pitting one human misery against another without any regard for the consequences and with absolutely no interest in finding genuine solutions. The result is not a society which is less multicultural, but simply one which is more divided, more frustrated and more dysfunctional.

The Council of Europe response to growing populism and intolerance is to invest efforts and resources and create a society in which diversity is accepted and respected, and in which conflicts, when they occur, are resolved peacefully, on the basis of commonly accepted values of democracy and human rights – and on the basis of mutual respect. The result is a society which is not only better, but also more stable."

To receive our press releases by e-mail, contact : Council.of.Europe.Press@coe.int

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 46 member states.