

# Press Release

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## Europe has learned to fight terrorism the hard way

Strasbourg, 19.03.2009 - In a [speech](#) to the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Washington D.C., Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis said he is "delighted" that the new US administration has embraced an approach to human rights which "rejects the bogus choice between security and freedom."

The 3 p.m. (EST) speech in the OAS Hall of the Americas – the first ever by a Council of Europe Secretary General in the prestigious *Lecture Series of the Americas* – focused on the "universality" of human rights. The Secretary General cited terrorism as an example of challenges to upholding human rights: "The fact is that Europe has a long and bloody experience of terrorism. We have learned – the hard way – that the objective should not be to fight terrorists but to defeat them," he said. "At the end of the day, the only effective anti-terrorist policy is one which stops more terrorists than it helps to recruit."

The Secretary General called on all nations to promote and protect human rights through effective intercultural dialogue and reminded all democracies, including the United States, to be "more self-critical and more open to outside comment and advice." He rejected arguments that certain countries – particularly developing countries – cannot afford human rights because authoritarian rule is more effective for nation building, economic development and reinforcement of state structures.

In the speech, which was transmitted live via television, radio and the Internet, he also explained how the Council of Europe sets a worldwide example of upholding human rights. He highlighted a "new generation" of Council of Europe conventions – including the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Cybercrime Convention – which "not only combine strong human rights safeguards with innovative approaches in international legal cooperation, but also are open to non-European countries."

The speech began the Secretary General's 18-20 March official visit to Washington, during which he will meet with OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, US State Department Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Daniel Fried, Acting Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, Ms Karen B. Stewart, US Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (Co-Chairman of the US Helsinki Commission) and Mr Paolo G. Carozza, President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.. He will also take part in a roundtable discussion at the US Department of State and is scheduled to hold meetings with officials of the US Justice Department.

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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.